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SHE FOUND HIM FAST ASLEEP IN A LARGE ARM-CHAIR.

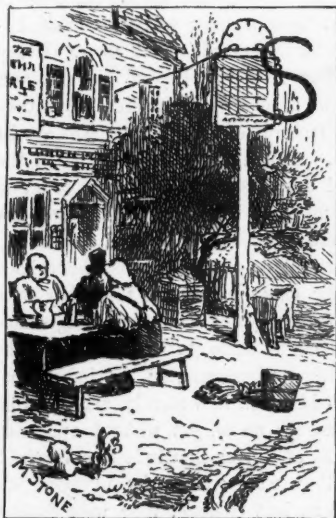
THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JULY, 1873.

Young Brown.

CHAPTER I.

DUKE OF COURTHOPE.



IR Odo-Plantagenet-Clansgold-Kinsgear-Revel-Wyldwyl, K.G., Duke of Courthope and Revel, in the peerage of the United Kingdom; Marquis of Oldmyth, Earl of Allswon, and Baron Partizan, in the peerage of Great Britain; Earl and Viscount Kingsland in the peerage of Ireland; Earl of Windguid, in the peerage of Scotland; and a baronet, was naturally a great man before the first Reform Bill. He sent eleven Members to Parliament, and persons who owed everything to his patronage were to be found by those who sought after them, in every department of State. He had once condescended to accept the Vice-royalty of Ireland at the personal request of

the Prince Regent, who liked to be splendidly represented; and had been for a short time a member of a Courtier Cabinet, which had loyally paid some of his Royal Highness's debts; but he was too magnifi-

cent a personage to care for office. He was a leader of that mighty oligarchy which controlled successive Ministries, and no party leader would have ventured to form a government without counting on his support or forbearance. He left his nominees in the House of Commons to vote much as they pleased on questions affecting their private interests; but directly any measure was brought forward which concerned himself or the privileges of nobility in general, his Grace, and some dozen or two of his personal friends, issued orders for its immediate withdrawal, and marched a compact body of their retainers down to Westminster to see that the business did not go any further.

Neither the Duke, nor any of his political connections, were unkind men. They kept great state in their country houses. They went abroad with trains of carriages, and set the populace agape with awe. They exacted an awe-stricken respect from every one who approached them, in an easy unaffected way, just as they expected that even a beef-steak, which was their favourite dish, should be served to them on gold plate, by a footman in livery. Those who paid them in full, and without haggling, all the deference they claimed as their birthright, had substantial reasons to be thankful for what they got in return. There was nothing out of the reach of the Wyldwyl influence. Places and pensions, bishoprics, commands in the army and navy, the enormously-paid sinecures of the law, and the best berths in the Civil service, which was then called the Service of the Crown, were among the least of the good things which depended on their favour; and they could demolish troublesome people as easily as they could crack nuts. Every one who had dealings with them knew as a fact beyond dispute, and concerning which even dispute was in a manner inexpedient, that they could make their displeasure felt when crossed too boldly. The stocks and the pillory were still in existence. A man might be whipped at the cart's tail by a resolute judge; and even justices of the peace could do strange things. Appeals might be made to the higher courts of law by stubborn people, but they were always costly and seldom successful; for witnesses were to be publicly seen walking about in the neighbourhood of the Old Bailey, with straws in their shoes, as a sign that they were to be hired, and a democrat who persistently made himself disagreeable and refused to mend his manners, might come to be hanged. The nobility were affable and condescending when amused, or indifferent; but not a few of them had shewn at odd times how sternly, and by what unscrupulous methods, they could avenge an affront without appearing openly in the matter. The sentiments of fear or gratitude they inspired, the universal servility with which they were treated by inferiors, did not depend on a slavish adherence to ancient custom: they were feelings based upon solid realities, and all sensible persons were aware that an abject subservience of the whims or interests of the hereditary masters of the country was the shortest way to wealth and honours. A nobleman could help or harm whomsoever he pleased, and if he

meant to be mischievous, there was no escape from him at home or abroad. A private note sent out in a king's messenger's bag received as much attention from Prince Metternich and Prince Polignac, or from Count Nesselrode, the Duke of Coutrofiano and the Italian courts, as a letter marked "confidential," despatched by mounted express to Lord Grenville or Lord Liverpool. Somehow or other, by hook or by crook, disaffected people, however cautious, got into difficulties and never got out of them. Noblemen were simply of opinion that the world, and all that in it is, was made for them, and nothing occurred for many years to shake their faith in that belief.

The Duke of Courthope, who lived at the close of the first quarter of the present century, had gone through the usual round of the pleasures and pains of a duke of the period. It was said that his youth had been wild; but this, if it meant anything, could only be supposed to signify that he formerly was rich and light-hearted. Old Mr. Mortmain indeed, the family solicitor, would sometimes look grave when the stories of twenty years before were mentioned in his hearing; a report had at one time been industriously circulated about a Scotch marriage and a daughter who had mysteriously disappeared, but who might, nevertheless, some day be proved heiress to the estates which mostly descended with the Scotch earldom of Winguid which his Grace had inherited from his mother. But this rumour died out, and the duke had long since been married by a prelate, whom he had placed on the Episcopal Bench, to Lady Mary Overlaw, sole heiress and representative of another duke, whose posterity were named as successors to the crown of England, under certain contingencies, by the will of Henry VIII. It was said in polite society, but it was not always said, that they had one son, a fine handsome young man with the family taste for enjoyment, and that the duchess had died without giving birth to any other children. Other people, perhaps better informed, averred that the duchess never had a son at all. It did not matter much. The *Peerage* printed that there was a Duke of Courthope, and that was enough for polite society's purposes. The bereaved widower did not take his wife's death much to heart; perhaps he was otherwise engaged, for there were many things which occupied his attention just then. He entertained Louis XVIII., and many of the French lords who followed him into exile, with such princely splendour that heavy charges on his property, and troublesome annuities, which subsequently inconvenienced his Grace considerably, began to take a vexatious shape about this time. Also he contested several elections to keep the disciples of Hunt and Cobbett out of public life, as Members for constituencies which were disposed to show an awkward hankering after independence. Notably, one Brown, a Scotch merchant, who had made a fortune from very humble beginnings in the East Indies, opposed the duke's nominee for a family borough, with a rancour and bitterness which seemed to arise from personal antipathy. The violent goings-on of this Brown, who had impudently bought some

land in the neighbourhood of one of the duke's estates, were at last mentioned to his Grace by a confidential agent charged with his election business; but the duke evinced no desire to continue the conversation. The struggle, however, was protracted with such obstinacy, that Mr. Brown was half ruined, and had to set out again upon his travels to repair his damaged fortune. Then the duke smiled in a peculiar hard, wry way he had, drawing down one side of his handsome mouth, when he had taken a determination; but he never visited the borough again, though all the shopkeepers in the place implored him to do so in the name of injured trade.

The latter years of his life were passed in retirement. He was old, he was gouty, and even poor. He never quite got over the political changes which occurred in 1831-2, and spoke of Lord Grey with great bitterness for having taken away so much of what belonged to him. The new power which had been set up in the state was money, and of that he had none at all. Mr. Brown came back, and turned his own uncle, Lord Rupert Wyldwyl, out of his seat for Skipworth, which pestilent town was built within a stone's-throw of his park gates. And what was worse, he could no longer punish his tenantry, because he was in the hands of trustees, and his rents were assigned or anticipated. The past of but a short while ago, when he was all potent, seemed so far off that he sometimes doubted whether he had not dreamed that he once was great. He, who was now shelved and forgotten, while men spoke with bated breath of one O'Connell, an obscure Irishman, and a French Count D'Orsay whom he had good-humouredly patronised was king of London. The only pleasure left to his Grace was that of cleaning his china, which connoisseurs esteemed highly; and feeding his peacocks who knew him, and perhaps sympathised with him, for they too were excluded from the state banquets of the sailor king, who had succeeded the tailor king. Once, when he went to London for a few days, a banker presumed to speak to him, the Duke of Courthope and Revel, a Knight of the Garter! His Grace looked at the banker with a surprise almost pathetic, but the rich man was in no way impressed by it; and whether it was this unheard-of impertinence, or the gout, or a constitution impaired by the dinners of Carlton House and the Pavilion, there soon afterwards appeared an article in *The Times* which credited his Grace with all the virtues, and told a thoughtless world that he was dead. Possibly the virtues may have died with him, to show a becoming respect for the memory of the last of our great nobles.

CHAPTER II.

WAKEFIELD-IN-THE-MARSH.

In the centre of a sleepy village on the borders of Oxfordshire there stood a small public-house, which was known to all the waggons on the road

for its sound beer and sweet hay. There were many waggoners about thirty-five years ago, and the "Chequers," which appeared from a large signboard, set in a clumsy framework upon a post, to be the sign of the inn, might have done a good business. But John Giles, the landlord, was for ever boozing with his customers on a bench before the door, and did not keep very clear accounts. He was a dull, good-natured fellow, who meant no harm to any one; and after his wife died there was no one to see into his gains. If he had his dinner ready at one o'clock, and a brown jug of mild ale at his elbow all day, he thought there was no need to trouble himself about anything else. A girl, who was said to be his wife's niece, kept these domestic arrangements in remarkably good order, and there was no one else on the premises but a contented ostler, who held his tongue whenever he could do so without offence, and did his work in a satisfactory manner, though not briskly; for whatever he might happen to be about, his eyes seemed to be always wandering in search of the girl, who evidently gave him subjects of reflection too deep for words. His name was Tom Brown, and he too was a connection of the deceased landlady, for she had taken care to people the inn before her departure, though she left no children of her own. He came from Northumberland, and had a deal of north-country shrewdness under his stolid looks.

The girl was known as Madge Giles for every-day purposes. The curate, however, called her 'Miss Margaret,' and she laughed at him for doing so, but was secretly pleased; and it was pretty enough to see her come out demurely when he was likely to pass that way, and blush to hear herself treated with so much respect. All that was known with certainty about her, was that her mother had arrived some nineteen years before at the "Chequers" in a state of utter destitution, and had died soon after her birth. Such incidents are common enough among the poor, and if perhaps the gossips formed their own conclusions, the Giles's were decent folk, and there was no call to worry them with bad words about it. So the orphan child grew up to womanhood about the house, made herself useful, and John Giles, who was usually in a hazy state, thought that very likely she was a daughter he and his wife had had without knowing it. Madge called him father, and things were very well as they were. She was extraordinarily beautiful, and equally ignorant; a perfect type of bodily perfection uninformed by a mind; an English peasant girl with no memory, no clear ideas about anything. She could recollect that there was a pudding for dinner last Christmas-day, and that she had fallen into the fire when a child; but she could not remember anything that was said to her yesterday, unless it directly concerned herself. She could not read or write, or count up to twenty without blundering, and could not tell the way to the next town, though carts and coaches going thither passed the inn many times daily. It would have been impossible to explain the commonest thing to her; and she could not pronounce the name even of her friend the curate. She called him "t' parson," whereas he appeared in the Clergy List as the Reverend Marmaduke

Mowledy. She was a lovely animal, a laughing, singing, cooking, sewing animal; and when Mr. Mowledy thought of her, as he very often did, he sometimes wondered whether we are all born with a soul, or whether we attain to a soul only through prayer and sorrow.

It was on a gusty afternoon, late in October, when woods are golden and every wind scatters its fairy treasure upon the earth, that a party of clowns were seated on the rustic benches before the road-side inn. They were drinking deep draughts of strong beer, and eating bread and bacon upon their thumbs. Now and then they threw a spare word to each other betweenwhiles, or a scrap of their food to the dogs who guarded their loads from tramps or gipsies, and who waited very intelligently and patiently, looking up at them with wistful eyes. From time to time a loud laugh went off among them like the crack of a waggoner's whip at some tale of the road; but they were not a jocular set. When they had eaten their supper they usually slouched off one by one, and with a prolonged "Gee-wo, Dobbin!" to the leader of their team, went lumbering on their way. At last there only remained one or two steady toppers, Harry Jinks the blacksmith, Mr. Joyce the sexton, and the landlord, whose minds and persons were constantly in soak, without appearing ever to get wet through. Night, sometimes so merciful, sometimes so full of pain and suffering and heavy with the birth of trouble, came slowly over the landscape. Cows and oxen were driven home from pasture, and one by one the lights began to shine in cottage windows. It was hardly a time to be abroad. The sun, after hiding itself all day, had fitfully broken out an hour ago, and left the sky red and angry. Dark clouds were rolling up in Titanic shapes from the west, and a few heavy drops of rain fell in the sullen manner which forebodes a storm.

Mr. Joyce, the sexton, a spare little man who seemed to have no room about him for the mighty tankards of ale he imbibed, and who looked so grave and respectable after he had disposed of them that people were inclined to believe some one else must have got tipsy in his place, commenced fumbling first in the ample flaps of his broad black coat, and then in the pockets of an extremely narrow pair of drab breeches, but without result. His gaiters had no pockets; perhaps he thought he might find some in his hat, for he took it off with a puzzled air; but only a red and yellow cotton handkerchief fell out.

"Ah," said Mr. Joyce, reflectively, "I do see how it be agin. My old 'oman's a took all the money, and a put un' in her ould stockin', that she have. Do 'ee chark up three pints, Madge. I'll pay next berryin'."

"That be noine pints as oi ha' dra'ad fur ye, sexton, wi' me own 'ans, sin' fower a clock," answered Madge, who came out in reply to his call. She was seldom asleep about a reckoning.

"Noine pints, as I'm a mon, Mr. Joyce," roared the blacksmith.

"So it be, wench; so it be."

"Noa, it hain't," returned the sexton. "I ha' drunk summut wi' John Giles, fur company, but it don't count. Do it, John?"

The landlord being thus appealed to, tried for a few minutes to get at some understanding of the subject upon which his decision was asked, but finding it all drowned, put down his pipe, that had gone out in the process, and stolidly let fall the words "nuff sed."

"John Giles doan't a waste un's talk, *he* doan't, blacksmith; he spakes to the pint, that he do. So I allus saith, an' so doth parson," remarked Mr. Joyce, whose language had a faint Biblical flavour about it whenever he wanted to get decently out of a difficulty. Moreover, the rural mind is ever ready with a bit of flattery for a crony who has anything to give away, and it is quite a mistake to suppose that sycophancy is confined to the upper classes. John Giles liked figs as well as any king, and Mr. Joyce having given him a sweet one, hobbled home, emitting a chuckle as heartfelt as escapes from the breast of an experienced courtier who has complimented the Prince of Monaco out of a place in the household. Whether such things are worth having, depends on the esteem in which a man holds beer and wine and small change.

The blacksmith rose with a yawn, stretched his great limbs, emptied his jug to the last drop and prepared to follow the sexton, when he noticed something coming slowly down the lane at a little distance. First it appeared like a red speck glancing through the trees, and behind it followed an object gaunt and shadowy, which dropped as it moved. The blacksmith had good eyes, and after watching these things for several minutes, he remarked to the ostler, who was looking after Madge, as he put away his pail for the night,—

"There be wun of them there red coats yonder, Tom, a leadin' of a lame 'oss, which have a broak down, to my mind. Maybe 'un on'y wants a shoe on, and I'll go down an' blow up the fire to make ready for 'un. I'd as lief earn a shillin' as not." And the blacksmith, thinking he had made a joke, gave out a laugh like the sound of a hammer upon an anvil.

On came the red-coat, with his horse toiling painfully after him, past the quiet mill, past the rectory, which had not been inhabited within living memory (the benefice to which it belonged being under sequestration, and the rector in the King's Bench prison), past the church which stood close by, past the stagnant pond, and the pound, where a tinker's donkey looked hungry and disconsolate enough. At last the dismounted horseman stopped before the inn door, and as he did so the old signboard of the "Chequers" creaked as it swung on its hinges in the autumn wind, and the rain fell faster, as though the storm had burst through the cloud-gates that had hitherto restrained it.

"Ostler!" said the huntsman, in a pleasant but rather peremptory tone, "put up this horse, he has sprung a sinew, and make him comfortable. Landlord, let me have a glass of your best ale, and I shall want a gig to go on to Dronington."

The landlord repeated the word "gig," as who should say, "It is all very well to want a gig, but where am I to find one?" and the rain lashed the road faster and faster.

Meantime, the huntsman had strode carelessly into the house, whip in hand, a splendid and noble figure of a man. He was tall and straight, with well-cut features, a colour fresh from health and exercise, and dark hair curling gracefully round his temples. He had flung himself on a wooden chair beside the kitchen fire, and was humming a tune in a clear strong voice, not unmusical, when Margaret Giles brought in some beer, and he looked up at her. He drank a deep draught, for he was thirsty after a long day with the Cloudesdale hounds, which was the most famous pack in those parts; then he fixed his large merry eyes again on the girl, and said, "What's your name, Mary?"

"Madge be moy neam, zur," replied the girl, blushing. "It bain't Mary, as I knows on."

"Madge is a very pretty name," answered the huntsman, laughing, and showing a set of fine useful teeth; when Tom Ostler put a stop to the conversation, and pulling his hair in front as a token of respect, though he did not seem to welcome the stranger's arrival very cordially, he addressed the huntsman in this wise:

"Master do say as how yee do want a gig, zur?"

"Ah," replied the stranger, good-humouredly, and apparently recollecting something he had forgotten. "Yes, I want a gig. Put to at once, will you?"

"We arn't got no' gig," remarked Tom Ostler, with visible reluctance, but there's a waggon not fur down the road as allus stops a bit at the 'Barley Mow,' 'bout two mile on. Ye can catch 'un up, zur, if ye run for't."

"Thank you," answered the huntsman, throwing himself back in his chair, with an amused yawn. "I can't run after a waggon, but you can fetch it back on your shoulders, and Madge can make me up a bed there." He laughed more after this, and his laughter was so joyous that Madge laughed too, and Tom Ostler grinned, wondering what it was all about. He did not understand how anybody could see the fun of sleeping in a waggon while there was a dry hayloft, but he did not say so, because his words had got rusty from disuse and would not come out of him easily.

The huntsman, finding Tom did not move, but stood staring at him and Madge, walked whistling towards the window and looked out. It was quite dark, and the storm now raged with the fury of an equinoctial gale. Behind him was the ruddy glow of the inn fire, and Madge, who was busy getting ready the landlord's supper. It had a hungry smell, that supper, and the huntsman began to think a good deal about it. Presently he turned round sharply, cast an impatient glance at Tom Ostler, tapped the devil's tattoo on the small diamond-shaped panes of the inn windows, and then asked Madge if he could have a fire in a private room, some dinner, and a bed for the night.

What was it possessed the girl as she answered mechanically, "Yes?" She felt frightened after she had said it. No traveller had ever before required a dinner and a bed at the "Chequers," but it was a large rambling house, and there were several spare rooms which were never

wanted. She could light a fire in one of them, and put some clean sheets, of which she had a large store, on a bed in another. It was not very hard work to set about this, and the stranger would be gone next morning. Her idea of a dinner was eggs and bacon with fried eels, which were plentiful about there, and potatoes. It is not a very bad one. There were half-a-dozen fitches hanging in the inn kitchen, plenty of eggs, and live eels enough and to spare in the tank: so an hour later the handsome gentleman, comfortably housed and fed, was dozing before a fire of his own, with his boots off and his slippers on upon the fender.

CHAPTER III.

THE ROADSIDE INN.

THE blacksmith had ordered another jug of beer to moisten gossip, and had sat down to supper with John Giles, to talk about the stranger and his horse.

"I have heered," said the blacksmith, reverentially, "that such big blood 'osses as that there yonder do cost a'most a fortin."

"Depends on what 'ee call a fortin," remarked John Giles, who had a dusty recollection that some one had told him his brewers were worth a hundred thousand pounds. "A yoss can't cost a fortin, Harry."

"He do," replied Mr. Jinks, firmly; "my brother noo a mon as lived down away somewheres in Leicestershire, and as told 'un as how Sir Francis Burdett paid a matter o' seven hundred pound for a yoss they called 'Samson': he worn't such a strapper as this one, by all accaents," and the blacksmith hit the table with a thump. Every one talked of Sir Francis Burdett in those days, and his name was a household word from one end of England to the other.

"Why, that there 'oss's shoes an' his saddle an' bridle cost as much as I earns in six months," continued the blacksmith after a pause.

"You earns a good bit in six months," returned the landlord, unable to grasp a fact so unfamiliar to his experience. "A bit of iron an' a scrap of pigskin can't be wuth much."

"Them there shoes be made of gun-barr'ls, they be; an' the saddles come all the way from Ingy," said the blacksmith, who was unwilling to relinquish a marvel when he had got fairly hold of it, and liked to make it as wonderful as possible, just as he made a shapely shoe with his hammer and tongs.

Madge sat in a corner of the inn kitchen drinking in these words, and the blacksmith, becoming conscious, by the magnetic influence of sympathy, that he had a willing listener somewhere in the neighbourhood, would have held forth much longer; but a steady series of snores, which began about this time to issue from the landlord, put him out in his narrative. The candle flared low in its socket at the same

time, and warned him it was growing late ; so he said "good-night" and went home to bed. John Giles, being then awakened by the sudden silence, got up, rubbed his eyes drowsily, and having muttered something about nine o'clock, toddled off to rest also.

The girl sat some time longer by the kitchen fire, thinking of she knew not what, but thinking very deeply. It was years afterwards that she became conscious of the thoughts which had passed through her mind as she sat that night with her neglected needlework in her lap, her eyes fixed on the pictures which grew out of the living coals, and which perhaps first aroused her torpid fancy. She must have been sitting there more than an hour when Tom Brown, with a lantern in his hand, thrust himself half through the doorway, and breathed hard. But the girl, apparently unaware of his presence, did not move, so absorbed was she in her waking dream. What had come over her since the morning ? She seemed far away from him ; there was something strange and distant in her manner, like that of one who belonged to another order of creation ; and the honest fellow became conscious of an inferiority he had never felt before. Still there was an infinite tenderness on his face which refined his coarse features, and gave an untaught grace to his movements, as he cautiously approached her, unwilling to intrude so mean a thing as himself upon her thoughts ; but presently he spoke, and though what he said was very homely, his voice sounded kindly and firm, as that of a protector who would shield her from harm with his life, if needs were.

"I be fur to carry summut writ on peeper into toun yonder," said Tom.

"Be ye ?" answered Madge, impassively, and still looking at the fire.

"It be fur him as be upstairs," continued Tom, jerking in that direction with his thumb ; "an' it be matter o' a duzen mile on end. I sharn't be back afore marnin'."

"It bain't no odds," said the girl, still motionless and absent-minded.

"Ye bain't afeerd, be ye, Madge ?" inquired Tom, putting down his lantern. "If ye be, I wun't go. On'y say the word, I wun't go."

"What shud o' be feerd on ?" answered the girl, angry at being disturbed in her reverie.

"Nought as I knows on," replied Tom, scratching his head, as though unconvinced by his own reasoning ; and he passed into the darkness outside. The sound of his clumsy steps, as he plashed through the storm, were heard for a few minutes, and then all was still, save the monotonous ticking of the Dutch clock on the kitchen wall, the chirp of the cricket on the hearth, and the hum of silence in the air.

Madge then remembered that she had not cleared away the stranger's dinner, and went to do so. She found him fast asleep in a large arm-chair, which had not been filled since her foster-mother's death. The dying embers smouldered in the grate, and the candles gave a fitful light

as they burnt down in their sockets. She did not like to wake the sleeper, and stood for some time irresolute whether to stay or go away. The splendid appointments of a gentleman of fashion, belonging to a generation somewhat more magnificent than that which has succeeded it, were scattered carelessly about the room. The massive handle of his hunting-whip shone like pure gold, and the lash, which trailed along the oaken floor, was as white as a streak of snow. He had cut off the feet of his hunting-boots to make slippers, and thrown the tops aside. There they lay in the coal-scuttle, with their glittering silver spurs tossed all awry beside them. A gold watch, richly chased with a coronet and cipher in brilliants, and a massive chain, was on the mantel-piece, and it seemed to Madge as if these brilliants were drops of water. She tried noiselessly to wipe them off, and found that they were hard. Then she remembered that she had heard of diamonds, which were said to be of inestimable value, and she looked at them with a girl's curiosity, turning them in the light and marvelling at their flashes. She was very near to him now, but he did not wake. One of his feet rested on the fender; the other was flung over an arm of the chair, and its slipper had dropped off. She had never seen such small feet, and she noticed, with a woman's eye for finery, that the stockings on them were of white silk. Still he slept on, and she grew bolder. She went to the table to see what he had eaten, and found to her astonishment that the fried bacon was left untouched, and that he must have managed his eels with a fork, for the knives were all quite clean. Then she looked again to see if he were yet awake, but he slept on, and she became fascinated as she looked. He was very stately and handsome, with his scarlet coat and pearl grey waistcoat, and the blue silk neckerchief half untied about his neck. His long hair, black as a raven's wing, and worn in love-locks according to the fashion of the day, fell over a forehead white as ivory, and the rings on one of his hands, which drooped negligently beside him, glanced and sparkled like living things. The girl was spell-bound; and she could hear the beating of her own heart as she stood there, afraid to stay, afraid to go away, and by-and-by afraid to move.

If any observer, impressed with the theory of race, had been at the "Chequers" inn that night, he would have been struck by a certain resemblance which might be traced between this village girl and the young huntsman. He was dark, and she was fair; but there was a likeness in their features: the same short upper lip and almond-shaped purple eye; the same full, well-cut mouth and strong cheek, with a peculiar dimple on the chin, which was rather soft and weak in its outline. They had even the same tones in their voices, and the same tricks of movement. They had both the same small, haughty head, which they threw back at times in the same way; the same shapely hands and feet, the same nervous limbs. The finer generations of animals resemble each other in this way; why should not the finer generations of men and women? For, after all, their resemblance was only that which a noble work of art,

brought to the highest pitch of perfection, may bear to another work of art equally finished; and yet this young man and woman, who would have seemed to a sculptor as ideal types of a splendidly matched pair, were a peer of England and a poor peasant maid.

At length the sleeper stirred uneasily in his chair, as though some careless dream had disturbed him, and he woke abruptly.

"What, Madge, my girl!" said he, passing one of his jewelled hands over those bright eyes of his. "Why, what's o'clock? I am afraid I have kept you out of bed to an unconscionable hour. By Jove! I declare it is nearly midnight. Bring me a candle, my dear."

She did not understand what he said to her. Her only idea was to escape, and she hurried away trembling. But he followed her, and caught her by the hand. "Madge, Madge!" he said. "You little bolter, what is the matter?" And, for the first time, the stranger eyed Madge with some of that complacency which Grand Turks are accustomed to bestow on maidens whom they delight to honour, and which was imitated pretty successfully in their dealings with country chamber-maids by the young nobles of forty years ago.

She turned her eyes away from him at last, and felt ready to cry. He released her, and she felt vexed and ashamed of herself.

"Fetch me another candle, my dear," he said coolly, "and show me my bedroom. I must be up and away early."

She had never thought of that. She would have run a mile in the rain barefooted rather than return to him, yet she thought of his going away with a sharp pang at the heart.

The Stranger observed this, for indeed he had a sharp eye in all that concerned the weaknesses of the adverse sex towards himself. He smiled, not unflattered that he should have brought down an inn-maid at a glance, neither more nor less than a titled lady at Almaack's. Then he drew her near to him composedly, glided his arm round her waist and said: "What a pretty girl you are, Madge! you must make the fortune of such a place as this. I give you my honour if I were a bumpkin I should be tipling stout downstairs all day so as to have it drawn by you." He laughed with a gallantry which would have transported a countess, lifted her chin with his forefinger, and pressed a light kiss on her cheek. She quivered from head to foot, disengaged herself from his embrace with a stifled cry, and fled.

CHAPTER IV.

DREAMS.

Poor girl! one of the many who have thought they could take care of themselves! What had she done that a whirlwind should sweep over her young life in this fashion? but for the matter of that, what has the wild rose-bud done, which has asked of God nothing but a little dew and a ray

of sunlight, and which the first gale blows torn and soiled into the clay? Madge had that rough knowledge of right and wrong which may lurk inborn in those who have been never preached to and never taught. She would have defended herself against the rude courtship of ploughboys or the ambiguous jests of tipsy pedlars; but where was the training that could have steeled her against a being who was as unlike the other men she had ever seen as day is opposite to night—a being who had paralyzed her faculties as lightning might do, blinding all her perceptions of good and evil and leaving her no power of reflection or resistance? His voice was softer and sweeter than any woman's she had heard; his eyes were a magic in themselves; the practical arts of a wooer were so familiar to him that he could fill a poor girl's head with fancies as intoxicating as new-pressed wine. In struggles like these the conditions of the contest are not even. When Education is pitted against Ignorance, Craft against Simplicity, Strength against Weakness, heaven alone can help the fallen.

That night, when everybody else in the house slept, Madge crouched in the darkness near the empty grate of the kitchen. The wind moaned weirdly outside as if in pain; the windows creaked in their leaden frames and the falling of the rain continued, ceaseless, monotonous and hard. But Madge was absent from all present sights and sounds, and fell into a kind of trance, which was neither sleep nor waking. Why was it that for the first time in her life she now thought of her mother, and tried to recall an image she had never seen from out of the shadows that thickened round her? In the churchyard there were tombs and over the tombs grew flowers, and when the spring breezes gently stirred the waving trees, white blossoms fell in handfuls over the grassy mounds, whilst birds sang above as if nothing but joy and peace could inhabit the garden which old men called God's acre. And the parson said these graves were simply resting places—soft beds where the weary lay in quiet till Christ came and led them by the hand to a kingdom where there was no labour and no sorrow. She wondered whether her mother was an angel and talked about her with the other angels, all in pure robes and crowned with gold? If she could only see her mother once—for a single instant—she who had never known a mother, she could whisper to her—something! For God would believe her mother. If He was angry with her now He would know that angels can only speak the truth, and for her mother's sake He would take from her heart the load he had just put there, and which was crushing her—He alone knew how cruelly! Disjointed fragments of prayers came back to her recollection, prayers of which she had never before comprehended the meaning: "Our Father." "O God our Heavenly Father." . . . God was something more than God then, and the punisher of sinners; he was Father! She staggered to her feet, stretched her hands in front of her and wailed: "Mawther, mawther! tell him it was none moy fault! He knows it wasn't"—then fell forward on her knees with her face against the ground and sobbed pitifully . . .

Hours passed, and she had crept again near the fender, with her

limbs numbed, her body trembling, and her fevered head resting on her curved arm. But the mists had somehow cleared. A soft music of bells rippled through summer air; there was a fragrance of roses; the bells sounded nearer; and birds soared chirping towards a sky so blue, bright, and warm! The church was before her; its doors stood open, and crowds were hurrying in, but they were not men and women. The graves seemed to have given up their sleepers, and spotless troops of angels, with the smiles of children, beckoned her to follow them to an altar shining with lights more than could be numbered. Then hymns uprose, first murmured, then slowly and sweetly swelling till they filled the church. Then other angels appeared with branches and lilies, which they strewed upon her path; and an unseen hand took hers and drew her to the altar where she had seen brides led, and where now awaited her with a beam of welcome the man who had fired her poor desolate soul with the passion of love. . . . She would have flung herself in his arms, but something restrained her, and they knelt together—she pledging herself to be faithful and obedient to him; he vowing to love, honour, and guard her all his days. And the while the bells chimed merrily, the organ pealed its holiest notes; and she, looking at herself, saw that she was arrayed in white like the others, for God had clothed her in His garb of innocence. . . .

How long she lay in that unconscious state, which is part death, part life, she could never guess; but during weeks and months afterwards she continued to start in her sleep, mingling the visions of this one fateful night with the indistinctly remembered reality. When she recovered her senses the darkness had faded. Two oblique rays of light were falling through the openings in the shutters; the wind had lulled, and the rain outside had ceased. A large cat, which had been prowling about in search of mice, started at her first movement and rushed away with a clatter over the coals in a corner, causing her to sit up on the ground terrified, and to utter a scream. But nobody heard her; and she pressed her hands to her aching forehead, to recollect where she was, and why she had come there. All she evoked was a dull throbbing at the temples; and she found her limbs cramped and racked with pain. Mechanically she rolled up a tress of her hair which had fallen loose over her shoulders, and incoherently repeated to herself snatches of the things she had dreamed, trying to sift them from the facts which had really happened. The effort was too much for her infant brain, unaccustomed to reason save on things actual and visible, and too weak to reflect much even on them. A stupefied and bewildered expression settled on her face; and there she remained sitting and hearkening tremulously to every sound, till she heard the first waggoner on the road draw up his team and shout for breakfast. It must have been nearly six o'clock in the morning then, for, upon the extreme edge of the horizon, towards the river, the autumn dawn broke dim and grey; and the waggoner complimented her for being afoot and about so early.

CHAPTER V.

MR. SHARPE.

It may have been some two hours after this, that is about eight o'clock, when there was a great commotion in the village. It was caused by the arrival of a four-horse coach, on which were seated five people; and such a coach and such people had seldom been seen in those parts before. It was a glittering painted thing with a dark blue body, almost black, and red wheels. It was drawn by three thorough-bred chestnuts and a grey. The grey went a little tender on his off fore foot, but made a smart appearance nevertheless. The horses had rosettes and streamers at their ears, and their harness jingled grandly as they tossed their heads and snorted along the road, lifting their knees up to their noses. They were driven by a shrewd-looking man, of some five-and-thirty years old, very clean built, and tight about the legs. He might have been a feather-weight when he was young, and now weighed at most eight stone. He was dressed in black from top to toe, save for a white neckerchief very neatly folded, confined by a horseshoe gold pin, and a scarlet under-waistcoat.

On the hind seat were two grooms, like the servants out of livery belonging to a great establishment. They wore short black coats, white cravats, buckskin breeches, and top-boots. They had cockades in their hats, which then really betokened that their master was an officer of the Crown, and they were as neat as new pins upon a fair-day. The third person was an impudent lad, dressed in a drab jacket and overalls, with a Scotch cap on his head. He had a complete suit of horse clothing beside him, marked with a duke's coronet and the cypher "C. & R." He sat on the seat behind the driver, and amused himself by squinting and making faces.

Beside the driver on the box was a fat, oily man, who used a great deal of pomatum, and whose garments of many colours sat stiffly upon him, as though they had come straight from the tailor's. The small tips of his large jean boots were varnished, his white hat was glossy. He was varnished and glossy all over. His gloves were white and tight, his outside coat was white and loose, his inner coat was blue, with gilt buttons. There were two monstrous pins in his long flowered satin cravat, and chains of gold, fresh burnished, dangled all about him. He held a cane, with an agate knob surrounded by garnets, in his great-coat pocket.

The coachman, who handled his cattle very neatly, brought them cleverly up before the inn door, and one of the grooms behind, swinging briskly down from his seat as they stopped, ran a few steps, touched his hat, from habit, for there was no one near, and called out sharply, "Is the Dook——?"

"All right, Bill," said the stud groom on the box, for that was the rank he held in a nobleman's household. "His Grace is here. There's

the big bay hoss shaking hisself among the ducks an' geese. Hi! girl, bring us some rum and milk. The wench looks like a ghost."

This last observation was addressed to Madge, who stared at the glittering equipage with feelings only known to herself.

The fat man in the white coat now descended nervously from the box, making his foothold ludicrously secure at every step, puffed himself out, put the knob of his cane in his mouth thoughtfully, and strutted into the inn parlour. Then he strutted out again, having found nothing.

"Where's the Duke"—he had just begun to say with some importance, when the stud groom glanced quietly down from the box at him, and observed in an under-tone, "There's his Grace looking out at yer from the winder, Mr. Sharpe."

The fat man seemed to grow smaller when he heard this, and his smug features put on an air of precipitate humility. He took off his shiny hat with a cringing air and bowed to the ground, while the young huntsman of the day before called to him in tones of astonishment and displeasure, not unmixed with anxiety, "Hullo, Sharpe, I thought you were at Doncaster. I told you to go yesterday."

"Game's up, your Grace. Tipster's lot had cut the grass under my feet."

"The devil they had. They must have used a scythe then, and I lose thirty thou' again with you confounded bookmakers. William, send up Lafleur with my clothes, and keep the team moving. I shall be down in an hour."

"All right, your Grace," answered the man on the box, touching his hat. "Mr. Sharpe, wake up Mussheer Leflore inside, will you, and tell the Frenchman to be off with the Dook's traps, or we shall have something at our 'eds from that there winder in a jiffy."

Mr. Sharpe, thus adjured, went hastily to the coach window, and bawled "Moussoo Lefloor" till the startled valet roused himself, and presently emerged with a carpet-bag, a dressing-case, and an india-rubber folding bath, with which he went upstairs. He was a very dignified gentleman, and looked like a minister of state, got up for an "at home."

"I say, Mr. Sharpe," now remarked the stud groom in a low voice, flicking something off the near leader's ears with his whip, "we've bin and gone and hit the Dook precious hard this time, at Doncaster."

"A still tongue makes a wise head, William," said the fat man, lighting a fat cigar.

"What do I clear by the fluke, Mr. Sharpe?" asked the stud groom, ruminating. "I've been a-thinkin' a good deal about that there public down at Epsom, since you put me up to it, and promised as how you would winter yer runnin' 'osses there."

"Never mind about the public just yet. That'll keep, that will, William. You've got a good place, haven't you? Well, then, slow and sure, that's yer motter."

"I don't complain, Mr. Sharpe; though the Dook don't pay up as he might do, drat him! The young beggar owes me a year an' a 'alf's wages,

an' there ain't no signs of his munney, as I sees. If it warn't for the corn-chandler and the saddler I should not have been able to put the pot on at the Derby this year, nohow. The coach-builder do say, says he, he won't give neither me nor Sam a rap till he gets his own brads."

"He be blowed," said Mr. Sharpe. "Go to my man, Riquetti, in Long Acre. He knows it's all right till I tell him it ain't. The young 'un must have some more wheels when he goes to town, and you can tell him Growler's things don't run light enough. He's sure to bite at that. None of them chaps can hold their nags together if they had a four-wheel furniture van behind 'em, but they're allis agog for light traps."

"I don't say no, Mr. Sharpe, and the dodge isn't so hard to try, is it? His Grace b'leaves anythink a'most as I tells him. It ain't very diffieklult to 'umbug him. But the grey mare she won't quite do, she won't."

"Why not?" sneered Mr. Sharpe. "You got your commission from Coper, didn't you?"

"Yes, I did, Mr. Sharpe, and in coorse many thanks to you for that an' all favers. Only Lord George he was a-talking to the Dook about her last Wednesday was a week; and a nod is as good as a wink. No offence, I hope, Mr. Sharpe?"

"Oh, dear, no, William. But what did Lord George say to his Grace about the grey?"

"His lordship said she warn't much good, onless for cat's-meat—that he did, Mr. Sharpe."

"And what did his Grace answer?"

"Oh, says his Grace, says he, I knows that very well, but old knife-blade won't do a bit of stiff for nuthink; and I thought he meant you, so I tells you on it, Mr. Sharpe. You got me my place, and I ham in dooty bound so for to do."

"Put stockings under her shoes, William," answered Mr. Sharpe. "She'll go even enough till the Dook wants another, and then, why you'll always find Coper ready with a five-pound note a leg. That'll do, won't it?"

"That'll do, Mr. Sharpe: but yer see the mare jibs; and when they goes a bit okkerd, the Dook gets hold of the whip, and, my eye, how he do pay it into 'em, and hollers, he do, enuff to scare a flock o' sheep. We shall capsize all on us some day, and I might just fall a bit heavy, you knows, Mr. Sharpe."

"Take off her bearing-rein, William, and put the other up to the cheek. Keep the whip away from his Grace at startin', and take care the boys give her her head."

The conversation went on in this strain for some time, while the drag was moving slowly up and down before the roadside inn, till the huntsman's bedroom window was thrown open again, and M. Lafleur, in broken English, ordered one of the grooms, who were lounging against the sign-post, to call the coach, as his Grace was coming down.

During these proceedings Madge Giles had gone about the house like one stupefied by a narcotic. She could not realize anything that had happened within the last twelve hours, and did not know whether she was

waking or sleeping. Mr. Sharpe had tried, with coarse familiarity, to joke with her, but she took no notice of him, and did not seem even to hear what he said.

Poor Madge did not drop, though her knees were weak and her eyes haggard. It is only the rich who can give way to their feelings in the privacy of a comfortable apartment, where cambric handkerchiefs are kept ready for tears, and a down pillow for an aching head. She had to light the kitchen fire and get breakfast ready, to sweep the house and feed the fowls; and she went about these duties, though her lip quivered with suppressed anguish and her heart felt heavy enough to burst her breast.

If she could only see *him* once more, thought the unhappy girl, she might bear her burthen better; but of that there seemed small chance. Directly the French valet had entered his room she was cut off from him as completely as if they were miles apart. One or other of the top-booted grooms was always running up and down the staircase, now with pails of cold water for the bath, now with jugs of hot water, now with boots and brushes; and all these things had to be taken down again and repacked in the coach, so that perpetual motion was going on at the roadside inn.

Towards nine o'clock, however, the bedroom door was dashed open with a bang, and a quick elastic step cleared the stairs two at once. It must be he who had stolen away her very self. She raised her hot red eyelids, which had been cast down before, and looked timidly out from the kitchen door. He was talking to Mr. Sharpe, with his back turned towards her, and she hardly knew him at first, he was so changed. He wore a dark-blue frock-coat, closely buttoned, a high napless white hat, and trousers of yellow cord. She had seen the uniform of the Clondesdale hunt before, but she had never seen such a dress as this. She feared he had gone away as mysteriously as he came, till he turned round and smiled at her; and then she looked at him with one glance of mute appeal that was almost terrible in its pathos. Her face was of an ashen white, her mouth was parted, and the underlip drooped with so strange a likeness to his own, that Mr. Sharpe again noticed it, and turning away relieved his feelings by a prolonged whistle.

But the wild mournful look of the girl, so fearful in its silent misery, fell unheeded on the callous noble. He patted her in a merry mood upon the cheek, and said gaily, "Madge, my pretty maid of the inn, pick me a flower for my button-hole as a keepsake."

There were some honeysuckles and late monthly roses in the inn garden, a legacy from the wealth of departed summer. She picked a rosebud for him and held it out with a hand parched by fever. He had already taken the reins when she brought it, and as he tried to put it in his breast, the leaders moved impatiently, and the rosebud fell broken to the ground. He had given her something as he took the flower from her. She did not know what it was. The next moment he was on the box.

"Let them go, boys," he shouted, and the grooms jumped away from the horses' heads. The grey mare backed and kicked viciously at the splinter-bar.

"Give her her head, your Grace," said Mr. William, the stud groom, quickly, and Mr. Sharpe clutched nervously at the rail of his seat.

"Where's the whip, William," asked the Duke, losing his temper.

"It's slipped down behind your Grace," said Mr. William, who had purposely dropped it. "Tom, look alive, and fetch his Grace's whip, can't you?" One of the boys, who had just climbed up behind, winked to the other, thrust his tongue in his cheek, and threw himself down. Mr. William pretended he could not reach the whip, when the boy held it towards him, and swore some quaint stable oaths, which put the Duke in a good humour. Just then, too, the leaders started off with a rush, and went over the hills and far away at a hand-gallop.

Madge gazed wistfully after the drag as it disappeared, and then, going up to her own room, she locked herself in, and cried with an exceeding great and bitter cry.

CHAPTER VI.

DESERTED.

MADGE was not seen again till late in the afternoon, when the inn had resumed its usual aspect. Honest Tom Brown, wondering at her absence, and the cold dinner without potatoes which was the inevitable result of it, could not get rid of an uneasy notion that something had occurred which was unknown to him. But he was an ignorant and inarticulate fellow, not a chatterbox even in his cups, of which he drank but few, and having been up all night, he was not altogether sorry for an excuse to lie down in the hayloft, and have a good sleep. He was tired with his twenty-four miles' walk to Dronington and back, tired with watching for her fruitlessly, and when he got up she was about again. She did not indeed speak to him, or to anybody else, and she looked as if she had been crying; but since yesterday he could not muster up courage to talk to her. So he mooned about in and out of the house, and backwards and forwards to the stables, thinking that all would come right in good time—an axiom with which many a dull man has been fain to comfort himself under dismal circumstances.

In the stable was the tall bay hunter; and the mite of a boy in a drab jacket and overalls, who had been rubbing its sprained leg and bandaging it by turns since morning. He had also swathed the horse up to its eyes in the clothing he brought with him, and having drank about a gallon of strong ale, the small boy and the big horse were about to set off together.

"He's still lame as he was afore, old stick-in-the-mud," remarked the small boy to Tom Brown; "but I've prummissed my old 'oman to be 'ome for supper—so we're off, and Red Rover can get hisself right arterwards."

"Ye mawn't go miscallin' your mawther that loike," said Tom Brown.

"My old 'oman ain't my muther, now then, stoopid," answered the boy, indignantly. "She's my missus."

"Ye bain't above a matter o' ten year old, an' ye got a missus?" asked Tom Brown, in much amazement.

"I'm risin' sixteen; fifteen last selliger," said the boy. "I knows it, cos it's the big day at Doncaster."

Tom Brown subsided after this information, though probably his private opinion was not much altered by it, and presently the short boy, who might have been any age between twelve and fifty, if judged from his appearance when closely examined, led out the tall horse and prepared to set off upon his journey.

"Who be yure maister, and wheer do 'un live?" inquired Tom Brown, with friendly interest, as they took leave of each other.

"Walker, up a street," said the boy, trying his latest acquirement in squinting; and tucking the horse's bridle under his arm, he began whistling "Nancy Dawson," and went about his business with the lame horse hobbling after him.

Nothing happened for many days after this at Wakefield-in-the-Marsh. It was a lost, out-of-the-way place, lying twelve miles from the nearest market town of any importance. The land in the neighbourhood, which was not very good for agricultural purposes, belonged to two or three great proprietors, and the sub-agents who collected their rents lived at Dronington. The inn was the best house in the village, and there was not a person in it but the curate, Mr. Mowledy, who ever subscribed to a newspaper or read a book. Even Mr. Mowledy had been for some time away in the north, and his duty was performed by a hasty parson, who rode over from Dronington at a brisk canter every Sunday, and kept his horse waiting at the "Chequers" while he hurried through a single service. It did not much matter: there were seldom more than half a score of bumpkins, chiefly old, who went to church at all, and they understood nothing of Mesopotamia, about which this hasty parson preached to them from an old mouse-eaten stock of sermons he found at the rectory. The rector himself had been a hard-riding, six-bottle man, who had got into debt and disgrace. He had not seen his parishioners since his insolvency, and had never at any previous period concerned himself with their education or culture; and Mr. Mowledy received but 60*l.* a year for filling one of the richest benefices in England as best he could upon so meagre a stipend.

There was none of the frightful poverty of populous cities, no hideous beggary with unheeded sores at Wakefield. The people did well enough, and got plenty to eat and drink. They had a very prolific breed of ducks and geese, which they sent with butter and eggs to market once a week. Most of them had a pig and a cow; those who had not, worked contentedly for those who had. But there was probably not a more ignorant or ill-taught place in England. Long ago Mr. Mowledy had tried his hand at a school; but the blacksmith, Mr. Jinks' father, and the wheelwright, who led the community, did not care to take their children from work to learn their letters; and John Giles, of the "Chequers," knew that Madge had too much to do at home to go dangling after the parson's heels. So by-and-

by all hope and ambition, perhaps all desire to improve his cure from that point of view, died out of Mr. Mowledy's mind, and he let things take their ancient, immemorial course.

He came back from the north a little older and more dejected than he went; for his brother and only relative, who had held a small living on the borders of Northumberland as locum-tenens for the patron's son, had died during his absence; but there was no apparent change in him. He preached wearily twice every Sunday, and once on Wednesday evenings, after his return, and his spare congregation was increased by Madge; who looked very pale and thin, but listened to him reverently without understanding much of his discourse.

He soon noticed the girl's regular attendance on his ministry; and the heart of the lonely man warmed towards her. He had scarcely more than the wage of a servant; he had no prospects of advancement, no respect for himself now. He could not ask any lady to share his penury, and if he could do so he knew of no one to ask. He might, however, take Madge to his desolate cottage, if she would go. She was a busy housewife, and would make him a good helpmate. There would be nothing to shock her feelings, or estrange her heart in his meagre fortunes. He would love her very dearly, and she would make his home bright with her presence. The girl had good natural abilities. She might be taught enough book-learning to make her a pleasant companion upon winter's evenings when their work was done. He knew she was thrifty and sweet-tempered. He only forgot that he was forty-nine years old and she not twenty.

It was one evening early in November that he spoke to her first. He even fancied she was waiting for him, and looked kind welcome from her large, soft, purple eyes; but that could only be imagination, overwrought by solitude. The hoar frost was on the ground, and the landscape seen from the stile near the village church, where he met her, was very tranquil and lonely. There was a path that led on through some meadows to the rectory, beside which stood his own forlorn cottage; it had been built by a former more prosperous incumbent for his gardener. He walked beside Madge through these fields, where the blackbird sang his loud good-night, and the wren and the speckled thrush were busy with the hedge-berries. It was she who spoke first, and she asked him, in a sweet, grave voice, if he would write a letter for her.

Mr. Mowledy, though surprised at this request, promised readily to do so, thinking in his own mind that it might refer to some brewer's or distiller's account which was overdue, and then he walked silently on beside her. He was a learned man, was Mr. Mowledy, and had taken honours at his college. He might have done well in the world if he had had more energy, or less conscience. But he let one opportunity after another glide by him in the race of life, and never overtook them or tried to do so. And here now was this gentleman and scholar abashed in the company of a village girl. If she had cared for him, if he had met such a woman once in the heyday of existence when his blood was young, if even yet she

had felt or could have felt one spark of love for him, he might have been helped out of his difficulty. A word or a look would have done it, and the pent-up tenderness of his gentle heart would have overflowed. But most girls are cruel where they are indifferent. Their eyes are closed, their ears are deaf to the concerns of all except those who can win their affections; and Providence has willed it so in mercy to mankind, that our wives and mothers may be entirely our own. So Madge, having said what she had to say, never more cast a glance at the parson, but went on absently breaking dried twigs from the hedges, and listening unconsciously to the carol of the birds.

They parted when they reached the road. The moon had just risen, and shed a quivering light through an old elm-tree, of which the topmost branches were dead and withered. A waggon toiled slowly up a hill, a dog barked in a farmyard close at hand.

"Good-night, Miss Margaret," said the parson, with a faltering voice. It was the only time he had ventured to address her.

"Good-night, zur," said the girl, and she too passed away from that good man's life unwon.

CHAPTER VII.

A WOMAN'S WAY.

THAT evening, after John Giles was gone to bed, Madge began to sing over her needlework, and when Tom Brown came in with his lantern to see that all was well before he went to sleep in the hayloft, she spoke kindly to him and asked him to have a jug of beer, as in old times.

She drank some of the beer herself, and when Tom asked her to sing his favourite song over again, she sang it so readily and so sweetly that his rough coarse nature was quite melted. Then she led Tom to talk of the boy in drab overalls and the big horse that had been left behind by the stranger huntsman; who had never more been heard of after he had left the inn that October day, now two full weeks ago. She never spoke of the huntsman himself, feeling with true feminine instinct that the subject was not agreeable to her kinsman. She seemed to be bent on pleasing him, and succeeded so completely, that he told her all about the urchin and his impudence over and over again. She was especially anxious to fix the name of the boy's master and the place of his residence in her memory, and went over it several times with Tom, laughing as she did so; and asked him to tell her if she had pronounced it rightly.

"Ees," repeated Tom, for the twentieth time. "Maister Walker, up street, wor his neame an bidin' pleeace, it wor."

When Madge had clearly ascertained this fact, the conversation went on less smoothly; and, as Tom was just going to say something about "fairings" and "true lovers' knots," which had more or less reference to a riband she was sewing on a cap, she sent him away to draw another

jug of beer, and when he came back stumbling from haste on the way, she was gone.

The next day also, while John Giles and the ostler were busy, she called to a pedlar, who had never passed that way before, and civilly offered him a crust of bread of her own baking and a tempting slice of cheese with his beer. The pedlar, nothing loth, went into the kitchen when thus bidden, but observed that he had had a bad day and earned no money.

"There bain't nowt to pay, maister," said the girl, smiling slyly, and then she asked if he could write. The pedlar said he could "off and on," and surmised that she wanted a letter written to her "bo." She took his banter quite good-humouredly, and, as pen, ink, paper, and envelopes (then recently invented) were all ready to his hand, he wrote, with many strange contortions and grimaces, some words she told him. They were few words, and he did not take long about it. When he had finished, he inquired with an impudent leer what direction he should put upon the letter; but she took the closed envelope, and hid it away, after which she looked quite unconscious, and would not say another word to him. So he got huffed and angry, shouldered his pack with a surly look, and went about his business.

In the dusk of the evening she slipped out, while John Giles was drinking with the blacksmith and the sexton, and she had sent Tom Brown to get some flour from the mill, situated a long mile from the inn. After walking briskly through the glebe meadows, where she was not likely to meet anybody, she rang at the parson's gate, and dropped a curtsy to that gentleman as he came in some embarrassment to meet her. Mr. Mowledy had only an old woman, who slept at home, to wait upon him; and she had left, as Madge knew, an hour ago, so that he was quite alone.

Having curtsied again, she took the pedlar's letter from her breast, and asked Mr. Mowledy, with her father's duty, to address it.

Mr. Mowledy put on his lightest pair of blue steel spectacles, which he had purchased at an optician's shop in the City when summoned three years before to see his rector, in order that he might not appear at too great a disadvantage in her eyes; and then mildly demanded the name of her correspondent. She replied demurely that his name was "Walker."

"And his Christian-name? It is always better to write that, in case of mistakes," observed Mr. Mowledy, wishing perhaps to prolong the interview with his parishioner as long as possible.

The girl hung her head.

"I mean," said Mr. Mowledy, who feared he might not have explained himself with sufficient clearness, "his baptismal appellation—the same which was given him, as to all of us, by his godfathers and godmothers. Your name is Margaret; mine is Marmaduke," added Mr. Mowledy, softly, and he blushed.

Now Madge had heard both the stud groom and Mr. Sharpe call the

stranger "Duke," so she curtsied again, as Mr. Mowledy pronounced his name.

"That be t' neame, zur."

"What! Marmaduke?" exclaimed Mr. Mowledy. "Dear me, it is an uncommon name too. Don't you think so, Miss Margaret?"

"Duke, or maybe Dook, be t' neame, zur," persisted the girl, afraid to let the sound leave her ears lest she should lose it.

Marmaduke," reiterated Mr. Mowledy, blandly, and, after further explanatory discourse, the reverend gentleman put the information he had received, with his own knowledge of geography and nomenclature, together. The product was no usual thing. Madge took away her letter addressed in a scrupulously careful and legible manner—

Mr. Marmaduke Walker
(*Dealer in fermented liquors*),
Upper Street,
Islington,
near London.

When the village was asleep that night, she posted it unseen and unsuspected. Mrs. Jinks, the postmistress, felt sure it was a letter from the parson, and spread a rumour that he kept a bottle or two of spirits in a snug place for private use. So she told Madge, who said, "Lauk-a-daisy me," not knowing whence the scandal came. Who does know when the grim, scoffing thing called rumour first spreads its agile wings, or whence it comes, or whither it speeds so fast? Dr. Porteous, the rector, heard it in the rules of the King's Bench Prison; it was whispered to the bishop of the diocese by the Dean of Dronington's widow. The magistrates laughed about "the curate's sly bottle" when they met at quarter sessions, and one of them, a jolly good fellow who had been in the navy, made a song about it, putting it to rhyme with "throttle," and singing it to a roaring chorus after a dinner at the "Crown," where the worshipful and loyal gentlemen refreshed themselves in company at the termination of their judicial labours. Mr. Mowledy was the only person for twenty miles round who never heard it at all; for rumour has a deal of humour in it, for all its gravity, and keeps prudently out of the way of contradiction.

CHAPTER VIII.

FOUND DROWNED.

DAY after day passed by for nearly a fortnight, but no letter, addressed to the village inn, ever arrived from Mr. Marmaduke Walker.

Madge watched for the postman as he passed through Wakefield-in-the-Marsh every morning in his donkey-cart, in hopes that he would stop at the "Chequers;" and once, when she thought he looked her way, she held out her apron, but he only stared at her and jogged along upon his round.

She seemed to pine visibly away during this time, and to have no care or pride in herself. The curate watched for her in vain as he walked from the church through the glebe meadows, taking always the same way home to his little cottage with a hope that he might meet her again, almost painful in its intensity; and though he had composed a sermon on a text taken from the thirty-ninth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis, especially to ascertain her views upon the subject nearest his heart, she never came to hear it; nor did she go at all to church any more. When Tom Brown shuffled into the kitchen of an evening, he found nobody there. She got dinner and supper silently ready for John Giles, and set it in order upon the white deal table duly scoured; but she never tasted the good food herself, and her voice was never heard now singing about the house. She passed most of her time locked up in her own room. But nobody, except Tom Brown, took any notice of her. John Giles had his meals and his beer as he was accustomed to have them, and nothing but an earthquake would have roused his fuddled intelligence. Even a convulsion of nature would have found him with a brown jug in his hand, and he would only have set it down, to take it up again after the shock was over. The blacksmith, who had been slowly making up his mind to marry Madge at some time or other, indeed looked about him now and then after he had finished his beer, as if he missed something, but he was not sorry that matters should bide as they were for a bit longer.

Tom Brown was the only person who knew that there was anything wrong, and he tried in uncouth ways to serve or comfort her. When she came downstairs, after moaning for hours to herself, she would find the hardest part of her work done. He kept the fire burning, swept the hearth, drew water, and put the kettle on ready for her tea, which she drank eagerly, taking hardly anything else. When one of the old customers called for her, he answered, and made some mumbling excuse which served the purpose well enough. One day he brought her some apples, which he knew she liked, and another he walked to Dronington for an orange. She found them on the table beside her tea things, and left them untasted. She appeared unable to bear the daylight, and never went outside the door as she used to do. She would stand with her face turned from the window, and her arm resting on the high kitchen mantelpiece; if spoken to, she answered without moving. All her clothes hung loosely on her: she had become terribly thin and wan. She started at the least noise, and once, when Tom Brown came in unexpectedly and looked her full in the face, she shrunk from him as though she were afraid. She avoided him more resolutely after that; watching with a beating heart and frightened eyes lest he should catch her unawares again.

Her favourite occupation when alone was to open a large carved oak work-box which had belonged to her foster-mother, and take out one by one the upper-leathers of a pair of top-boots, a dried rose-bud, and a strip of flimsy paper. She was never tired of looking at these things, but would rock herself in her chair, with her clasped hands on her knees,

and wait over them. If she heard a step on the stairs, or any one called for her, she would hide them hurriedly away, and with trembling limbs and a ghastly face, assure herself that her occupation had not been discovered.

It was about the tenth day after the letter to Mr. Marmaduke Walker had remained unanswered, that a great change came over the girl. She rose very early in the morning, and toiled throughout the day without ceasing. She arranged all her cupboards, and the presses where the household linen was kept. She washed and put away all her glass and china, and carefully attended to everything that had been neglected and wanted setting to rights. Before she went to bed she raked out the kitchen fire and laid it afresh, spread the cloth for breakfast, and cut some slices of bread and butter, to be ready for John Giles when he got up. She bade good-night to Tom Brown very kindly, drew some beer for him herself, and opened the door for him when he went out to his hayloft over the stables, closing it loudly after him and bolting it. Then all these things having been done in order, and the whole house thoroughly swept and garnished, she went to her room with a strange, absent air, and opened her work-box once more. But she did not cry over it now: there was only a sad, resolute expression in the girl's eyes; and after silently contemplating her worthless treasures for an hour or more, she opened her window and looked down into the road. She could see clearly, for the moon was at her full, and nothing was stirring for a mile around. The bat and the fieldmouse only were abroad; and the low hoot of an owl coming from the ruined rectory was the solitary sound which broke the stillness of the night. Not a dog barked, not a light was seen in a cottage, not a watcher kept vigil at Wakefield-in-the-Marsh. She remained for some ten minutes, looking anxiously from the window, and having satisfied herself that she was unobserved, she threw a shawl over her head, so as to conceal her features, and went quickly and noiselessly downstairs. She had thought of everything. The bolts, which had been cleaned and oiled that day, slid smoothly back at her touch; the door turned easily upon its hinges, her bare feet fell unheard upon the hard ground. She went on walking very fast, turning neither to the right nor to the left, till she came to the mill-stream, at a place where it was very deep and rapid. Then she stopped, and knelt down by the waterside, and prayed with a smothered sob; after which she cast a startled glance hastily round her, and listened like some hunted animal. A fish which leapt out of the stream had disturbed her, and there was a far sound of wheels, but it died away and all was still. It was only the night waggon, slowly passing on its way to Dronington, and when it had gone there was not a human being who could hear her brief cries and her short struggles. She went then to the river's brink, took her shawl from off her head, and tied it closely round the skirt of her dress in a tight knot, so that she could not move her legs or feet, and she let herself fall headlong into the swift-flowing water. A loud splash, one natural effort, with uplifted arms, for life, and all was over. She was borne fast down stream.

Some Literary Ramblings about Bath.

III.

As Bath was considered the most famous and the most fashionable sanitarium in England, of course the medical faculty flourished there. The hero of the *New Bath Guide* writes—

As we all came for health, as a body may say,
I sent for the doctor the very next day.

* * * * *

The doctor advised me to send for a nurse,
And the nurse was so willing my health to restore,
She begged me to send for a few doctors more.

What happened after this consultation need not be related; the caricature is amusing, if somewhat coarse. Bath, in reality, has been, for more than a century, famous for enlightened medical professors of the best kind, though the wits have been very prone to gird at them. One of Anstey's imitators writes—

We're doubtless provided with medical men,
Not one or two only, nor yet nine or ten:
They're twenty M.D.'s, though their names I've forgot them,
With P—— at top, but heav'n knows who at bottom.

This writer declares that the famous Dr. Harrington—

Though gifted by nature and genius to follow
Each heavenly art of his patron Apollo;
With medicine or music so skilled to controul
The diseases alike of the body and soul;
E'en him they neglected, neglected to hear—
Neglected, ye gods, for the men of small beer.

But—*fortes vixerunt ante Harringtona*: some of these I have already mentioned. I have now to speak of another famous contemporary of Nash and Quin.

Dr. Cheyne was, for many years, a well-known character in Bath. He practised there for half the year, and for the other half in London, as fashionable physicians have since divided their time between London and Brighton. I have read many medical works, but I know none more gravid with good sense than Cheyne's, and certainly none so amusing. Towards the close of his life he became an advocate—though not to the uncompromising extent sometimes stated—of the vegetarian system of diet, and what he preached he practised upon his own person. It is narrated of him that he recommended Beau Nash to take to it, in his old

age, and that Nash asked him whether he wished to persuade half the world to go grazing like Nebuchadnezzar.* Cheyne, in effect, told him that he would soon have to do something worse than that, and called him an "old blasphemer." On another occasion, the Physician having prescribed for the Beau, asked him if he had followed the prescription. "No," said Nash, "for in that case I should have flung myself out of window and broken my neck." It is probable that Nash was not the author of this joke, but I am not learned enough in jest-lore to trace it to its true source. However, the Fop had the advantage of the Physician, after all; for he lived to be eighty-six, whilst Cheyne died at eighty-four. But Dr. Cheyne, like another well-known vegetarian philosopher (Dr. Lambe†), had originally a very crazy constitution, and so many ailments that, in the ordinary course of things, one might have expected that he would have only a short life, and a wretched one. Both have given the world their own experiences; but the "Author's case," as written by the elder Physician, is scarcely so convincing as that of the younger. Cheyne, indeed, admits that living on animal food and wine, he had a spell of twenty years of ease and comfort, which does not seem to have been more than he enjoyed under the other system; but he ran rapidly to flesh, so much so that he grew to be thirty-two stone in weight, which made it difficult for him to go upstairs to see his patients. He seems to have reduced himself by a process the very reverse of that recommended by Mr. Banting, and lived upon milk, roots, seeds, &c. for the rest of his life. Whether he made many converts or not, at Bath, is not recorded. But there are many people here who incline to this kind of diet, at the present day, and pronounce authoritatively on its good effects.‡ Certainly upon economical grounds, if on no other, it is to be strongly recommended during the prevalence of the existing high price of butcher's meat. If we could turn our whole families and establishments into vegetarians we

* Goldsmith, who tells this story, always calls him Dr. Cheney.

† Dr. Lambe succeeded to the practice at Warwick long held by the father of Walter Savage Landor. Landor himself was warmly attached to Mrs. Lambe, regarding whom there are several passages in that great writer's correspondence. A very interesting memoir of the great physician has been written by Mr. Edward Hare, C.S.I., who formerly held a distinguished position in the Indian Medical Service, a most accomplished gentleman, who now resides in Beckford's old house, in Lansdowne Crescent. He is an able advocate of the vegetarian system, and an excellent illustration of its good effects both bodily and mental. The book is one of the best examples of brief biography that I have seen, recommending itself equally to the public and the profession.

‡ I propounded the question, the other day, to several intelligent gentlemen, as to whether milk is animal or vegetable food. The majority contended that it was the former. Dr. Cheyne says it is "vegetables immediately cooked by animal heat and organs, and directly (without going the circulation) drawn from their chyle, or an emulsion of vegetables in the stomach." Dr. Lambe, however, appears to have described milk as "an animal fluid." The pure vegetarians of his time—the Newton family, and others—seem to have admitted it very reservedly, and to have eschewed cream, butter, and cheese altogether.

should be less troubled about our household expenditure. And if we are to believe the leading writers on the subject, this diminution of the cost of living will be manifested not merely in the retrenchment of our butcher's bills, but in a cessation of our wine-merchant's accounts. It is alleged, that abstinence from animal food is attended by an absence or diminution of the desire for strong drink. But it is not easy to reconcile this with the belief that the greatest consumers of strong drink are those who do not dip into the flesh-pots, from week's end to week's end. Recent experiences would seem to indicate that the higher the price of butcher's meat, the greater the profits of the Excise. It has not unreasonably been asserted, that many of the poorer classes in the great towns, especially in London, live upon cheap (in other words, diseased or putrid) meat and fish; but the Irish, who live chiefly on potatoes, and the Scotch, whose ordinary diet is oatmeal and potatoes, do not seem to abstain from whisky.

I have quoted the *New Bath Guide* so often, that I must now say something about its author. Christopher Anstey was born to a good inheritance and had every advantage that the most costly education could bestow. He made the best of his opportunities—but one thing was wanting to complete his happiness. The robustness of his body did not keep pace with the robustness of his mind. "The visible decline of his health," wrote his filial biographer, "in consequence of a bilious fever, was the cause of his visiting Bath for the benefit of the waters, which he drank by the advice of Dr. Heberden, and for which he was indebted to the gradual re-establishment of his health and spirits." What he then saw and heard inspired him to write that famous satire, *The New Bath Guide*. It was composed, or, at least, completed, at Trumpington and first published at Cambridge in 1766. It has been stated that the original idea of the work was borrowed from *Humphry Clinker*. But the novel did not appear until some time after the poem had been published, and had achieved a large amount of popularity. Smollett was at Bath in 1767, when, doubtless, the *New Bath Guide* was subject of conversation. But the design of *Humphry Clinker* may have been conceived at an earlier period (for he had paid previous visits to Bath) though not executed until a few years later. It need not be said that of that design the account of Matthew Bramble's visit to the western watering-place was but a small part.

The success of the *New Bath Guide* was wonderful. Dodsley bought the copyright, and ten years afterwards said that he had made more money out of it than out of any other book within the same space of time, and in a fit of generosity restored it to the writer. Editions of all sorts and sizes have been published, and some of them with the worst illustrations ever seen. And the book is not altogether undeserving of its popularity, though doubtless its merits were overrated at the time. Horace Walpole said that he would rather know Christopher Anstey than Oliver Goldsmith. But this strange choice is said to have been influenced

rather by social than by intellectual considerations.* Anstey's son describes his father's poem as an "epic"—a designation, which, having an almost infinite latitude of interpretation, we may suffer to pass. It is certainly one of the pleasantest social satires in the language. The fluency of its versification has been rarely excelled. If among the very rare instances that might be cited, Goldsmith's *Haunch of Venison* is to be named, I think that we may fairly surmise that the versification of that piece was suggested by Anstey's poem. What Mr. Forster says of the former might well be said of the latter: "Written with no higher aim than that of private pleasantry, a more delightful piece of humour, or a more finished piece of style has probably seldom been written. . . . An indescribable airy elegance pervades and encircles all." That the success of such a piece should have brought forth sundry imitations from the pens of smaller poetasters was to have been expected. Among others was published, in 1790, a *Postscript to the New Bath Guide*, by Anthony Pasquin, the merits of which may be judged by the following specimen—

The people of Bath, ever since Quin's halcyon days,
On the haunch and the dory bestow ample praise,
And expend a great part of the denizens' treasure
In eating which they think life's primary pleasure.

I doubt whether worse verses than these were ever written—but at a later period (1811) a book was published, entitled *The Wonders of a Week at Bath*, "a doggrel address to the Hon T. S., from F. T. Esqre, of that city"—which displays considerable talent. I have already made quotations from it.† It comes more nearly to Anstey's brochure than anything I have seen.

When Anstey settled in Bath, he pitched his tent in the Royal Crescent, then recently erected. His son states that he purchased the house. It had a good garden at the back of it, in which the satirist delighted. There is a story current to the effect that when the design was formed for the erection of St. James's Square, Anstey was deprived of his garden, and that he was greatly exasperated by such a curtailment of his privileges and pleasures,‡ upon which he delivered himself of the following pungent epigram:—

Ye men of Bath, who stately mansions rear,
To wait for tenants from the Lord knows where,
Would you pursue a plan that cannot fail,
Erect a madhouse and enlarge your gaol.

* Mr. Forster says that Anstey would not have been noticed "with anything but a sneer if, besides being a scholar and a wit, he had not also been a Member of Parliament." I cannot find out that he was ever a Member of Parliament. His son, who wrote his life, seems to have been quite ignorant of the fact.

† *Cornhill Magazine* for June, p. 692; and p. 1 of the present paper.

‡ This story requires some explanation. Dr. Tunstall says that Anstey "received notice to quit." His son says that he bought the house. If this be true, he must have only rented the garden, unless ejected according to the modern process by an Act of Parliament.

Stung by this, Bath found a local poet to answer the author of the *New Bath Guide*, and one was found to produce these lines:—

While crowds arrive fast as our streets increase,
And the gaol only is an empty space,
While health and ease here court the grave and gay,
Madmen and fools alone will keep away.

It is said that at this time (about 1790) there were no prisoners in the gaol. Anstey did not much like this retort; but, being neither madman nor fool, he was not minded to keep away from Bath. He lived on, and he died there, in ripe old age, and was buried in Walcot churchyard.

But we must not forget the literary ladies who have dwelt in Bath and written about its manners and its usages. Conspicuous among them are Mrs. Piozzi, Madame D'Arblay (Miss Burney), and Miss Austen. The first-named spent many years at Bath, whence she wrote many vivacious letters to her friends. She was there with her first husband in 1780,* and with her second in the winter of 1787-1788. "How little I thought," she wrote on the first day of the latter year, "that I should celebrate this 1st of January, 1788, here at Bath, surrounded with friends and admirers, the public partial to me, and almost every individual, whose kindness is worth wishing for, sincerely attached to my husband. . . . I have passed a delightful winter here—caressed by my friends, adored by my husband, amused with every entertainment that is going forward." This, however, was only a chance visit, probably for the benefit of her husband's gout. They lived principally in Wales—paying occasional visits to the old house at Streatham—the gradual disappearance of which I watched with infinite regret, for it was associated with my earliest recollections. Piozzi died in 1809, and a few years afterwards she took up her residence in Bath. She appears to have sojourned there for some seven years in a state of rampant senility, retaining all her wit to the last, but none of her wisdom—if she ever had any. She gave a great ball at the Assembly Rooms to celebrate her eightieth birthday, and led off with her adopted son. She made love to a handsome young actor, whose grandmother she might have been. She lived in Gay Street, of the dangers of which she has given an account confirmatory, of the alarming statements, before cited, of our friend Matthew Bramble. "Dear, dear! what a fragile thing life is! A young man was riding full gallop down the street yesterday, and fell down dash at the very spot where Miss Shuttleworth was killed. This street always was like Virgil's Tartarus, and now 'tis like the high road to it." In 1817, as already stated, Queen Charlotte went to Bath. "The Queen has driven us all completely distracted," wrote the lively old lady

* The Thrales resided principally on the South Parade. Some account of this early visit will be found in a subsequent notice of Miss Burney, who accompanied them.

in November; "such a bustle Bath never witnessed before. She drinks at the Pump Room, purposes going to say her prayers at the Abbey Church, and a box is making up for her at the theatre. Of the clusters in the Pump Room, who swarm round Queen Caroline (Charlotte), as if she were actually the queen bee, courtiers will give you an account." But she tells her correspondent in the following year, "The Queen's approaching death gives no concern but to the tradesmen, who want to sell their pinks and yellows, I suppose.

Mrs. Piozzi had a great fondness for actors, especially if they were handsome; and, as all the best of both sexes visited Bath in the first quarter of the century, she had frequent opportunities of entertaining them. The Kembles, Mrs. Siddons, Miss O'Neill, Charles Young, and others are frequently mentioned in her letters. That she was no judge of acting is very plain, from the fact that she thought Conway a great performer. "Conway is in high favour at Bath," she wrote in 1821—"the papers say so—so do private letters. That young man's value will be some day properly appreciated." And yet he was but a stick of an actor—his only merit consisted in being what was once called "a proper man." What amount of patronage the stars received at that time, except upon special occasions of benefits or bespeaks, it is not easy to ascertain from the correspondence of the day. But I am afraid that it was not very great; for the author of the *Wonders of a Week at Bath* (1811) tells us that, although the manager—

Takes care to engage

The great London actors to set off his stage;
Yet Lewis and Fawcett and Bannister, these
Never fill all the boxes, however they please.

But the writer adds—

One occasion there is, when the belles and the beaux
Engage every place, and the house overflows;
When gentlemen-actors attempt to perform,
Then all the beau-monde sally down in a storm.
No matter what play—the astonishing sight
Is the bear that can dance and the crow that is white;
Tho' puppies are things neither curious nor rare,
The wonder is all how the deuce they got there.

And the lapse of sixty years has made no difference in this. I can record, from my own experience in 1878, that the lines above quoted are painfully true. The theatre is not patronised, when those who earn their living by it devote their skill and industry to the representation of the best pieces; but it was difficult to obtain a seat a little time ago, when a party of amateurs got up a performance in which they "attempted" some broad farces. As a general rule, it has been said that "the worst professional is better than the best amateur." This is true of everything but cricketing. It is emphatically true of acting. It has been so often said that "history repeats itself," that I, who sometimes dabble in history,

am ashamed to repeat the saying. But I find in the volume, from which I have just quoted, this passage—

This night there's a concert; and there, if you're willing
To pay for your music a bit and a shilling,
You'll find all the fiddlers and singers of note,
And hear Catalini *has got a sore throat*.

There was very lately a grand "Titiens Concert" advertised here for weeks and weeks, and when the time came the greatest lyric artiste of the age had a sore throat, and was, like Catalani, conspicuous by her absence.*

Among the most cherished friends of Mrs. Piozzi, when she was Mrs. Thrale, was Fanny Burney, afterwards known as Madame D'Arblay. Their correspondence is full of endearing terms. But the elder woman could not bring the younger to congratulate her on her second marriage, and from that time there was an irreparable rupture between them. The wounds could never be healed. In 1782, the one was "my lovely Burney," and the other "my sweetest of friends." They seemed, at one time, to live on the reciprocation of the most fulsome flattery, and on lauding themselves each for the benefit of the other. It is hard to say whether the widow or the spinster wrote the greater amount of gushing nonsense. But in 1784, there was a dead silence between them. The grave had closed over their friendship.† It is my purpose, however, only to say that there is in Miss Burney's Journals and Letters a good deal of sprightly matter about Bath, whither she went (after a previous visit to the city) with the Thrales in 1780. After a few days' journey, they alighted at the York House. Fanny Burney was in ecstasies. "I really admire this beautiful city," she wrote, "more than I did when I first saw it. The houses are so elegant, the streets are so beautiful, the prospects so enchanting, I could fill whole pages on the general beauty of the place." The Thrales took a house at the left corner of the South Parade—"most deliciously situated, meadows, hills, Prior Park, the soft-flowing

* I had intended, had space permitted, to have discoursed at some length on Bath theatres and theatricals, and had made many notes for the purpose. Wood the architect says, "Plays are acted some of the other evenings of the week in a cellar under part of the ballroom of Simpson's Assembly House." His book was published in 17—. I have a note of a letter written by Lady Luxborough in 1752, in which she says: "We have friendly Othellos, Falstoffs, Richards the Third, who entertain one daily for half the price of your Garricks, Barrys, and Riches."

† I find the following in Miss Burney's Journal of 1787: "Mr. Fisher said to me, 'A friend of yours, ma'am, drank tea with me lately—one who did not ask after you.'

"And who was that?"

"There can be but one of that description in the universe!"

"He meant, I found, poor Mrs. Piozzi. May she be happy! She has had her share of making me otherwise—a share the world holds not power to give to her again. Alas! she has lost what gave that ascendance! And those cannot long give great pain who have forfeited their power to give pleasure. I find this truth more and more strongly every time I think of her; but where I find its strength the most, is that I think of her, any way, less and less."

Avon, whatever nature has to offer."* The "beautiful Circus" and the "exquisite Crescent" charmed her. She saw much society at the Thrales, and seemingly very good society. Among others she met Mr. Anstey and Dr. Harington. The latter is described as "dry, comical, and very agreeable." Of the former she spoke slightly, but admitted that he improved on acquaintance. Even then, however, she could not make the admission without infusing into it a dash of spite. "Mr. Anstey," she says, "opens more on more, and approaches more nearly to being rather agreeable. If he could but forget he had written the *Bath Guide*, with how much more pleasure would everybody else remember it." This, coming from one who never forgot for a moment that she was the writer of *Evelina*, is something truly delicious. In another passage, still speaking of Mr. Anstey, she writes, "Ah! how different and superior our sweet father, who never thinks of his authorship and fame at all, but who is respected for both by everybody for claiming no respect from anybody." It is a pity, indeed, that the charming Fanny did not inherit a little of the modesty of the sweet doctor.

Of the once famous *dilettante* meetings at Bath-Easton, Miss Burney gives some account: "Do you know," she asks, "that, notwithstanding Bath-Easton is so much laughed at in London, nothing here is more tonish than to visit Lady Miller, who is extremely curious in her company, admitting few people who are not of rank or fame." Lady Miller herself she describes as "a round, plump, coarse-looking dame, of about forty; and while all her aim is to appear an elegant woman of fashion, all her success is to seem an ordinary woman, in very common life, with fine clothes on. Her manners are bustling, her air is mock-important, and her manners very inelegant."

In those days Spring Gardens, on the other side of the river, were an attractive resort, to which even the quality betook themselves to eat breakfast, or to drink tea and to disport themselves. There is an amusing account in the *New Bath Guide* of a visit to this place, and its consequences. Fanny Burney describes several visits to these gardens—one at the instigation of the Bishop of Peterborough, who improvised a frolic there, and stood treat. She was a frequent visitor to the Theatre, and it would seem from her journals, if not from Mrs. Piozzi's, that it was very well attended by the chief people of the place. She sometimes went to the Assembly-Rooms' balls, but generally declined invitations to dance. Mr. Tyson was master of the ceremonies at that time, and he is spoken of in terms of high commendation—But as I have another lady of whom to write—one whose works are now held in much higher esteem than those of the authoress of *Evelina*—I cannot afford space for longer notice of the vain and vivacious Fanny Burney.

Miss Austen resided at Bath with her family from the spring of 1801

* It has been stated that at a later period, after her second marriage, Mrs. Piozzi lived in Gay Street (No. 8.)

till towards the close of 1805. They lived, firstly, at No. 4, Sydney Terrace, and afterwards in Green Park Buildings. On the death of her father, in February, 1805,* the widow and daughters removed to lodgings in Gay Street. Thence the family betook themselves to Southampton. The author of the Memoir of Jane Austen says that his aunt "does not appear to have had any work in hand during her four years' residence in Bath." Yet there is assuredly strong internal evidence that *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* (the latter certainly) were written during or after that residence, though there is a surmise that the Miss Austens, when young girls, visited Bath with some relatives of the name of Cooper. The biographer says, "*Northanger Abbey*, though not prepared for the press till 1803, was certainly first composed in 1798."

In another chapter, Mr. Austen-Leigh states that "*Northanger Abbey* was sold in 1803 to a publisher in Bath for ten pounds; but it found so little favour in his eyes, that he chose to abide by his first step, rather than risk further expense by publishing such a work. It seems to have lain for many years untouched in his drawers. . . . But when four novels of steadily increasing, though moderate success, had given the writer some confidence in herself, she wished to recover the copyright of this early work. Her brother Henry undertook the negotiation. He found the purchaser very willing to receive back his money, and to resign all claim to the copyright. When the bargain was concluded and the money paid, but not till then, Mr. Henry Austen had the satisfaction of informing him that the work which he had esteemed so lightly was by the author of *Pride and Prejudice*." The probability I think is, that *Northanger Abbey*, the scene of the greater part of which is laid in Bath, and the local colouring throughout most faithful, if originally written in 1798, from girlish recollections of the place, must have been subsequently greatly revised during the residence of the family in Bath. There is a ripe knowledge of society apparent in the book, such as could hardly have been attained during those early visits to the Coopers'. With respect to *Persuasion*, I think that there is strong internal evidence that it was written during this residence at Bath, and a certainty that it was written after September, 1804. In that month Miss Austen was at Lyme Regis. The chapters in *Persuasion* relating to that picturesque little watering-place must have been written from personal observation, and there is a freshness about them which seems to indicate that the impressions were recent. I do not, therefore, quite accept the biographer's statement, that Miss Austen had "no work in hand during her four years' residence in Bath."†

* He was buried in Walcot churchyard.

† Mr. Austen-Leigh states that Miss Austen seldom or never affixed to her letters the date of the year in which they were written. Corresponding with the four years 1801-1805 there are only two letters in the memoir, one written from Lyme, the other from Gay Street, Bath. The latter is supposed to have been written on the 21st of April, 1805. But as her father is stated to have died in the February of that year, and Jane Austen writes (two months afterwards) in the highest spirits about morning

There are many people and many things connected with the past history of Bath, in days beyond the memory of its present inhabitants, that I might have discoursed upon, with pleasure at least to myself, if not to my readers. Such omissions are compulsory in the limited space at my disposal. I could not ramble on for ever about the beautiful city, which in Miss Burney's time was so "tonish," which, when it took three days to reach it, was frequented by all the chief people of the land, but which, though still one of the pleasantest dwelling-places in the country, and can be reached in three hours, is not now a favourite resort of fashion, or the cherished home of genius and learning. I can only make two more selections from my list of Bath worthies. They are both within the memories of living men.

Among the later celebrities of Bath was William Beckford the younger—commonly known as "Beckford of Fonthill"—who wrote the romance of *Vathek* in early youth, and some volumes of travels when he was older. He had a taste for building towers (or, as they are called by others, "follies"), and for collecting pictures and articles of vertu. On these objects of curiosity, which he kept as much as possible to himself, he expended vast sums of money which he had inherited from his father, a West Indian merchant, who was twice Lord Mayor of London, and who died with the civic harness on his back. The father was deeply and widely regretted—which history cannot record of the son.

For my own part, I am disposed to think that the elder Beckford was a more interesting character than the younger. He was a plain-spoken, honest man; just, generous, and charitable. He snubbed George the Third, and gave a banquet in the City during his second mayorality to both Houses of Parliament, which cost him ten thousand pounds. In those days the after-dinner toasts were less "healths" than "sentiments." Among Lord Mayor Beckford's toasts were, "May the fundamental liberties of England be revered and defended!" "May the noble assertors and protectors of English liberty be held in perpetual remembrance!" "May the violators of the rights of election and petitioning against grievances be confounded!" "May corruption cease to be the weapon of Government!" This was in 1770. One can imagine the startling effect which such a toast as the last of these would have produced at Guildhall or the Mansion House, just a century later, if substituted for that of "Her Majesty's Ministers." Not contented with the ventilation of these liberal sentiments, Lord Mayor Beckford desired to induce his guests to sign a document "binding them while in public life to speak and act by the dictates of conscience, and to pledge themselves to maintain in-

calls, and concerts, and evening-parties, it is not easy to reconcile the two dates. In the letter of which I am speaking, she says: "My cousin George (at the concert) was very kind, and talked sense to me every now and then, in the intervals of his more animated fooleries with Miss B—, who is very young and rather handsome, and whose gracious manners, ready wit, and solid remarks, put me somewhat in mind of my old acquaintance L. L." *Mansfield Park* has nothing to do with Bath, but one is irresistibly reminded by this of Fanny Price, Cousin Edmund, and Miss Crauford.

violably the integrity of the Constitution, without views of ambition or aggrandisement, unaccompanied by place, pension, promotion, or any personal advantage." It is stated that Lord Rockingham strongly objected to this proceeding, and that the intention was foregone. Shortly after this, he made the famous speech to George the Third, which excited his Majesty's resentment as much as it delighted the citizens of London. The biographer of the younger Beckford says that some sceptical persons have questioned whether the speech was ever spoken. Just before dinner at Guildhall, little more than a year ago, I read the greater part of it engraved in marble beneath Beckford's statue, in the Banqueting Hall. It was spoken on the 13th of May, 1770. Less than six weeks afterwards he died. He had travelled up from Fonthill (no very easy journey in those days) to attend to some business connected with the mayoralty, and had caught a rheumatic fever which ended his useful life.*

Much honour was done to him after his death—especially by the citizens of London. Among the elegiac verses which commemorated his decease, was a poem containing these lines—

A patriot firm from motives ever just,
Nor place, nor pension could betray his trust ;
His soul untainted with the golden bait,
Still scorned the reigning maxims of the great.

As he had something like 100,000*l.* a year, this was among the least of his merits. What place or pension could have been of any use to him ? Some ingenious friend might have whispered to the poet to substitute the word "title" for "pension." He died plain Mr. Beckford. Worse men have been made peers, even in our times, on account of their money. But, as the writer says, in by far the best line in his piece, the alderman was one, who—

Did what he said and said whate'er he thought,
so he had no chance with George the Third.

When the younger Beckford sold Fonthill to Mr. Farquhar, he came to reside at Bath, and lived at the end of Lansdowne Crescent. He was then in his sixty-third year. His biographer says: "The life this singularly gifted man led at Bath was as retired as that at Fonthill. He brought there the same habits ; but they were on a diminished scale. The inhabitants of the city in which he resided knew as little about him as those of the metropolis. He was seen occasionally on horseback with the Duke of Hamilton, passing through the streets ; but not more than half-a-dozen persons, literary men and artists, were admitted to his acquaintance. His old porter at Fonthill, Pero, a dwarf, continued to be his porter at Bath. Old servants were still in his service, and strongly

* In the interim he had gone up to the King with an address on the birth of one of the numerous royal children (a Princess) ; George kept him waiting for some time, and then sent him a message by the Lord Chamberlain, saying : "That as he had thought fit to speak to the King after the answer to the remonstrance, his Majesty desired that nothing of the kind might happen for the future."

attached to him, as both his tenantry and domestics had been at Font-hill." This, at least, is something in his favour. But it would be hard to conceive any severer condemnation of a man of vast wealth, than the statement by a friendly biographer, that the inhabitants of Bath knew as little about him as the citizens of London. It is plain that he was not minded to give to the poor, or otherwise to do his duty to his neighbours. He died in his eighty-fifth year, on a May morning in 1844, having probably been as little a benefactor to his fellows, as any man who ever lived so many years and spent so vast a sum of money. I am not surprised, therefore, to find that he has anything but a good reputation in Bath, among the few who know anything about him. He was, indeed, a vain, selfish, egotistical, rather priggish sort of person,* with moderate abilities, which his wealth vastly magnified in the eyes of his parasites. Bath has certainly revenged herself upon him for his neglect, by neglecting him in turn. I have often heard him spoken of as "Mr. Beckwith."

Among the recognised sights of Bath is "Beckford's Tower." It stands in the Lansdowne Cemetery—a statement which, although perfectly true, has something of the appearance of an anachronism. For the tower preceded the cemetery, which was laid out around the building, and in consequence of its antecedent existence. For Beckford had directed that his remains should be buried at the foot of the tower, which was not within consecrated ground—a matter which did not disquiet him in the least, as it has not disquieted many wiser men. After his death, the circumjacent ground was sold; and there was a design of appropriating it to the purpose of a tea-garden. In this crisis, Beckford's daughter, the Duchess of Hamilton, intervened, and with filial reverence, not to be too highly commended, repurchased the ground, and presented it to the City of Bath, for a cemetery. And a very beautiful cemetery it is. Beckford's body rests, therefore, on consecrated ground near the Tower, not underground, but in a handsome red marble sarcophagus, within an entrenched position, near the base of the "folly." The tower itself is, of course, dismantled. It contains none of the treasures of art, which it was once considered a privilege to be permitted to examine. But the treasures of nature are the same as they ever were,† and you may see from the upper windows much finer pictures than you could have seen on the inner walls of the eccentric building.‡

* It is related in his *Memoirs* that he said to a friend, "Now mark a singular thing, which will never happen to you again as long as you live. A few days ago I gave you my *Lives of Extraordinary Painters*; I now give you another of my books, written seventy years afterwards. What do you think of that?" "Your Life will some day be among that (?) of extraordinary authors." "Yes; and of extraordinary artists, too," he interrupted.

† This might seem to be a truism; but it is not. For Beckford's tower is so built as to look over the city of Bath into the distant country, and the rural prospect, therefore, has not been marred by the activity of architects and masons, as otherwise it might have been.

‡ Beckford's tomb, as originally designed, had a heavy iron railing around it,

The *Memoirs of William Beckford of Fonthill*, published anonymously in 1859, by Mr. Skeet, has the distinction of being one of the worst books ever written. It would be very dull but for the slipshod style, which is sometimes extremely amusing. Take this for an example—"He (Alderman Beckford) laid it down as a maxim that no one should be suffered to sign his own confession of a crime *when brought before himself*."* Again, "On a friend telling *him* (William Beckford, the younger) that *he* knew *his* age from two letters to Lord Chatham, in one of which *he* said—'William was made a Christian of last night.' 'Well! and no doubt you think a very pretty sort of Christian I was manufactured into.'" Such a jumble of *he's* was never, perhaps, known before—the remarkable fact being that the "*he*" who wrote the letter to Lord Chatham is not once mentioned. The *he* was William Beckford, the elder, who did not write that his son was "*made a Christian of*," but "*that his son was made a Christian*." One more example. It appears that Beckford the younger, with an amount of filial reverence and good taste not to be too highly appreciated, told some one, in the course of conversation, that his father had "*scores of natural children*." On which the biographer observes, "*Not scores exactly—he recognised and provided for them all, as well as for a daughter, Barbara, Mrs. Wale. His sons were Richard, Charles, John, Rose, Thomas, and Nathaniel*." This makes out a list of seven—certainly "*not scores exactly*." But the most noticeable point of all is that the biographer seems distinctly to repudiate the idea of a daughter being a *child* at all.

Far more to be held in remembrance, as one of the worthies of Bath, is Walter Savage Landor. By ties closer or less close he was connected with Bath for a period of sixty years. He sowed his wild oats here on first coming into his paternal property; he married here; and he lies buried here. For many consecutive years, towards the close of his life, he dwelt

with pillars or piers of masonry. A local writer, with reference to the Widcombe cemetery, at the very opposite extremity of Bath, in which it was at one time placed, says:—"The whole space in front of the chapel is occupied by the enclosure of the tomb of Beckford of Fonthill, with its heavy railings and hewn stone piers. What a pity it is that he did not himself design it! Then, indeed, his grave would have been an ornament; whereas now it seems uselessly to occupy the foreground of the chapel. The red granite tomb, which was made under his direction, is one of the most chaste and beautiful efforts of the sculptor which modern times have produced. Descended from the Saxon kings, he is interred (?) above ground, his tomb bearing on bright brazen scrolls the words he himself wrote," &c. &c.—*Tunstall's Rambles about Bath*. After resting in Widcombe for some time, the sarcophagus clomb the Lansdowne Hill again, and there it is now to be seen. The outer works (railings, &c.) I was told by the presiding genius of the cemetery had been sold.

* I am reminded by this of a most delicious bit of information that I recently found in a fashionable London paper:—"Certain aristocratic ladies of the West End," it was stated, "who cannot brook the idea of their churches being cleaned out by the hands of hireling menials, have formed themselves into a society called the *Phæbes*, the members of which are solemnly pledged to do the *work of cleaning themselves*."

almost entirely in Bath, and he would have died here but for a painful circumstance, which caused him, when in his eighty-fourth year, by the advice of his friends, to betake himself to Italy. The natural impetuosity of his temper, acting upon a judgment impaired by age, rendered him scarcely responsible for an act which none defended and all deplored. In the words of one who loved and admired him, he

stooped
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,*

and this temporary obscurity is not now forgotten in Bath, where still any mention of his name commonly elicits the remark, "Oh! he did so-and-so, and he had to leave the place." His local reputation, perhaps, is even less than Beckford's—but then he did not build a tower of brick and stone. The tower which he built was of another kind—*exegit momentum, et cat.*—and years will add only to its beauty and its strength.

What primarily took Landor to Bath I do not know. Probably, in the first instance, he came, as many others did, from the days of Matthew Bramble downwards, because it was comparatively accessible from Wales. It is enough, that on succeeding to his property, he came here to spend his money and to write his poems. Mr. Forster, quoting a letter from Landor's younger brother, says that he had "the reputation of great wealth, and the certainty, at his mother's death, of still greater. A fine carriage, three horses, two men servants, books, plate, china, pictures, in everything a profuse and wasteful outlay, all confirmed the grandeur." "Upon the whole," adds Mr. Forster, on his own account, "not a life for such a man either profitable then to have lived or now to recall." Of course it could not last very long. His affairs soon became involved, and he had to think seriously of disentangling them. He adopted a more modest plan of living, and sought better excitement in foreign travel and the throes of literary labour. He visited Spain, and he wrote *Count Julian*. He lived then on the South Parade, in the lower part of the city. Of his habits of composition we have, at least, one extraordinary glimpse in a letter to Southey. "I believe," he wrote, "that I am the first man who ever wrote the better part of a tragedy in a concert-room." As soon as he had completed this magnificent monument of his genius, he fell in love. "It is curious," he wrote to Southey, in April, 1811, "that the evening of my beginning to transcribe the tragedy, I fell in love. I have found a girl without a sixpence and with very few accomplishments. She is pretty, graceful, and good-tempered—three things indispensable to my happiness."

The young lady was Miss Julia Thuillier. She was a member of a family well known and much respected in Bath during a long series of years. The head of the house was of Swiss extraction, a member of a noble family, who, probably for some political reason, had been compelled

* Robert Browning. I do not mean that the poet wrote this of Landor. He wrote it of Paracelsus.

to emigrate. He had business relations with Spain, which kept him much away from home, but his wife had brought up a large number of boys and girls in a most exemplary manner. Mr. Forster says that Landor, when he married Julia Thuillier, "seems literally to have had no other knowledge of her than that she had more curls on her head than any other girl in Bath." This was not propitious, and the marriage, as might be expected, was not a happy one. The biographer, with praiseworthy candour, says, "with whom primarily, and to the greatest extent, the blame must be held to rest, I do not think there can be any doubt." And he adds an extract from a letter written by Mr. Robert Landor, in which the brother says, "I will do this little wife the justice to say that I saw much of her about three years after her marriage, during a long journey through France and Italy, and that I left her with regret and pity." One of the sisters married General Stopford, and with the Stopfords Landor seems to have been on terms of pleasant intimacy all his life. I remember to have read some charming verses which he wrote to their daughter, Lady Charles Beauclerk, about 1848, in the *Keepsake*, or the *Book of Beauty*, illustrating one of the loveliest portraits I ever saw in my life. I envied the artist whose privilege it was to paint such a head and shoulders.*

The old love of Bath, which brought him back to it after many days, found expression in one of Landor's early letters to Southey. "You remind me of Bath—if not a delightful, a most easy place. I cannot bear brick houses and wet pavements. A city without them is a city fit for men before the fall.† But, alas! they fell before they built. The South Parade was always my residence in winter. Towards spring I removed into Pulteney Street—or rather towards summer—for there were formerly as many nightingales in the garden and along the river opposite the South Parade as there were in the bowers of Schiraz. The situation is unparalleled in beauty, and is surely the warmest in England. I could get a walk into the country without crossing a street, which I hate. These advantages often kept me in Bath until the middle of June, and I always returned about the beginning of November." Southey's testimony

* There is a note at p. 557, vol. ii. of Mr. Forster's biography, relating to the youngest brother of Landor's wife. Speaking of the poet's relations with the Thuillier family, the biographer says:—"He enjoyed, also, through life the friendliest regard of another of his wife's relatives, the youngest of her brothers, his godson, and called Walter after him, who became a most distinguished engineer officer in India." Friend and companion of my younger days—friend happily still of my old age—to think that thou shouldst be so described as to be scarcely recognisable, even by one who has known thee for nearly fifty years! The brother-in-law, to whom reference is here made, was not named *Walter* but *Landor*. He is now Colonel Henry Edward Landor Thuillier, of the Bengal Artillery, not Engineers, and is Surveyor-General of India.

† This passage is not very clear. But Landor could hardly have meant that Bath was free from wet pavements. I am sorry to have to record that the pavements seem always to be wet.

in favour of Bath was that "in spite of thirty years' labour towards spoiling it, it still remains the pleasantest city in the kingdom." Sixty years have passed since this was written, and it is still the pleasantest city in the kingdom.

When, in the latter years of his life, Landor, after long residence in Italy, returned to England, he hesitated whether he would pitch his tent in Clifton or in Bath. "It was my intention," he wrote to Southey in September, 1837, "to return at the end of the month to Clifton. . . . I have a great love for Clifton, above all places in England; yet I cannot endure the sight of flowers and fields, where I had ever spent pleasurable hours. So, instead of Clifton, I think I shall go to Bath in the middle of next month." "That is," writes Mr. Forster, very pertinently, "to the very place where he had lived the most pleasurable hours of his early life." So he went to Bath, and sojourned there twenty-one years, receiving from and paying visits to friends, revising old and writing new books, and altogether leading a genial, cheery, social life, by no means that of a literary recluse. No man had more friends, or friends better worth having; among these were Dr. Parr, Southey, Charles Lamb,* Dr. Birch, Robert Browning and his wife, the two Hares, Sir William Napier, Algernon Swinburne, and John Forster, his admirable biographer. The last-named of these went every year to Bath to spend Landor's birthday with him. His sound critical judgment was of immense value to the poet, who invariably went wrong, when he rejected the counsel of his friend—and no less so, when he failed to accept the same kindly advice with respect to affairs of a more personal character.

Up to the very last day of his life this old love of Bath clung to Landor with as much affectionate tenacity as ever. He said of old that he loved Bath because it reminded him of Florence; but in later days he loved Florence because it reminded him of Bath, though it could not compensate him for the loss of the English city. During the period of his enforced banishment preceding his death, he said more than once that there was no place equal to Bath. "Red mullets," he wrote, in October, 1858, "compensated Milo for Rome. We have them daily, with ortolans of late, and beccaficos. But these do not indemnify me for Bath—the only city I could ever live in comfortably." And again, in December, 1859, from Florence, "Bath has no resemblance on earth, and I never have been happy in any other place long together. If ever I see it again, however, it must be from underground or above. I am quite ready and willing to go, and would fain lie in Widcombe churchyard, as I promised one who is no more." He had made up his mind to be buried there, years before, and the certainty of his dying in Italy had not shaken his resolution. And, indeed, I am not surprised. Almost might it be said of Widcombe churchyard, as Shelley said of Keats's

* Landor met Lamb in the flesh only once,—but some friendships ripen in an hour.

burial-place, that "it might make one in love with death to think of being buried in so sweet a spot." Landor had celebrated it in verse :

Widcombe ! few seek with thee their resting-place ;
But I, when I have run my weary race,
Will throw my bones upon thy churchyard turf ;
Although malignant waves on foreign shore
Have stranded me, and I shall lift no more
My hoary head above the hissing surf.

His "weary race" was closed for ever on the 17th of September, 1864. The last years were saddened by the results of the unfortunate feud which had driven him from Bath. And it must be an abiding source of sadness to his friends, among whom I class all who love him for his writings, that there is no outward sign of the venom having ceased to rankle in his heart. But the great Searcher of all hearts may have ordered it otherwise at the last. Who knows ?

How it happened that, after all, he does not sleep in the English churchyard, I do not know. He had written, in 1857 : "Three months hence I shall once more purchase a landed property, situated in the parish of Widcombe, and comprising, by actual admeasurement, eight feet by four, next adjoining the church-tower in the said parish." And again, in the following year : "I drove out for the first time, and was less fatigued than I expected. My object was my burial-ground. It has been fixed on near the church-tower at Widcombe. Sixty years ago, in this season (June), I promised a person I dearly loved it should be there. We were sitting under some old elders, now supplanted by a wall of the churchyard." He was then in Bath. But even from Italy he wrote to Mr. Forster, that, "by means of the small remnant of the pittance he had taken with him, he had so arranged that he should sleep his last sleep in the grave-yard of the little church near Bath, where he had chosen his place of rest." And the biographer, after recording Landor's death, states that "he was laid in the English burying-ground, and a stone placed over the grave."* But the only monument to be found there is, in Shelley's words, "a monument of an unaccomplished purpose." Thrice I made a pilgrimage to Widcombe churchyard, but could not find Landor's grave. On my third visit I saw the incumbent of the parish, who courteously gave me the information I sought. The ground for the poet's grave had been marked out, but neither the body nor the tomb had ever come to England. Landor's remains lie interred in the Italian city. Florence and Bath contended for him living. Florence gained the mastery in death. I am bound to add that the mistake was mine, not Mr. Forster's. "The English burying-ground" spoken of by the bio-

* Of this stone Mr. Forster gives a curious account : "On it had been cut correctly his name and the dates of his birth and death ; but the Florentine stone-cutter's English was imperfect, and the word 'wife,' which should have appeared in the last sad tribute of the rest of the inscription, had taken the quite unintelligible form of 'coife.'"

grapher was the English burying-ground in Florence. Perhaps this might have been more clearly stated, and some explanation might have been offered of the reason why the remains of the Poet were not suffered to rest where he wished ; but I cannot be angry with an omission which carried me to one of the loveliest spots in the neighbourhood of this lovely city.*

I must pause here. I have written far more than I intended, but not so much as it would please me to write. I have been accused of many omissions (among others of the absence of all notice of the illustrious Mr. Pickwick), but I was compelled to select from the multitude of Bath worthies only a few for purposes of illustration, and to write sparingly of places and things. Some amusing pages might have been written about the old Bath hostelrys—the “Bear,” the “Bell,” the “Three Tons,” and others. And some space might have been devoted to an account, in a graver spirit, of the religious edifices of the city. It may be a fancy of mine, but I have often thought that there is no place in the kingdom which, with reference to the extent of the population, has so many houses of worship. Perhaps it is, that so many being built upon the slopes of the beautiful hill, more are visible at the same time. I do not, however, think that this wholly accounts for the apparent exuberance of churches and chapels. Every conceivable denomination of Christians has good accommodation for worship in Bath. I put this down amongst other advantages, and not the least, for which the Queen of the West is celebrated. I come round now to the point from which I started—making the end meet the beginning. In whatsoever spirit the words be uttered—in benediction or malediction—the best advice that I can give to my readers is to—

“GO TO BATH.”

* I should have stated that Landor, during the latter years of his residence in Bath, lived in Rivers Street.

The Story of the Civil Service Supply Association.

BY ONE OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS.

THE Civil Service Supply Association is the oldest Co-operative Society in the Service, and it has been the model upon which all other London Co-operative Societies have been formed. Although barely eight years old, and in its commencement most humble, it is now selling goods at the enormous rate of 780,000*l.* a year, and is fast revolutionising the retail trade, not only of London, but of the whole country. Surely the story of its rise and progress is worth the telling.

The Association originated in the Post Office. The winter of 1864-5 (like many other winters, and for that matter summers too) found a good many of us Post-Office men engaged in a rather hard struggle to make both ends meet. Some of us had ventured to ask for higher pay, and had been favoured with the usual sympathetic but depressing reply, that it was regretted that the circumstances of the case would not justify any addition to our salaries, &c. &c.

Feeling, as we did sharply, the general rise in the cost of living, especially in the price of all articles of clothing consequent on the American War, one or two of us had already bethought ourselves of Co-operation as a means of lessening our difficulties. I, for one, being a Liberal in politics (for there are some few Liberals in the Civil Service) had watched with interest the doings of the Rochdale Pioneers, but could not at all see how to apply their experience to our own case.

One day, however, two office friends came to me—it was, as I well remember, a foggy, gloomy day in November, enough to make one more than usually despondent—and declared once for all, that they must either have more to spend or manage to spend less. They had given up all hope of more pay, and as a last resource they proposed that we should try to spend less by means of Co-operation. Their idea was that we should induce a number of Post-Office men to procure their supplies of coal from some one coal-merchant, in the expectation that by the largeness of the united order, and by the payment of ready money, we should obtain a considerable abatement in price. Talking the matter over, we resolved to try buying on this plan; but we soon agreed that coal was not a good article for the experiment, and in the end we decided to make a beginning with tea. That very afternoon one of us on his way home called at a celebrated wholesale house (I even now withhold names for fear of the wrath of

retail traders) and learnt that by buying half a chest at a time, and paying for it in ready money, we should save from 6d. to 9d. a lb. We therefore invited a few other office friends to join us. Each wrote down on a list the quantity he would take, at the same time handing in the money to pay for it. Some of the most cautious limited themselves to a single pound; others boldly co-operated to the extent of two pounds, a few rash men pledged themselves to three pounds, and we promoters had to take enough to make up the full order. The tea was bought, and after office hours we weighed and divided it amongst the purchasers. It proved to be excellent, and soon a demand arose for more. Other men in the office, who had heard of our successful venture, wished to join, and this time there was no need for us promoters to take more than we wanted. Some one now luckily discovered an empty cupboard in the office, and here we locked up our second half chest of tea till we could divide it amongst ourselves.

This cupboard was the original store of the Civil Service Supply Association.

More tea being very shortly needed, we prepared for a third purchase, and now so many joined us that we had to buy a whole chest. It was no joke to make up 100 lbs. of tea into parcels of two or three lbs. a piece, but we were lucky enough to find one who, like old Trapbois, was willing, nay eager, to undertake the task for a consideration. This was a funny little fellow, since dead, whose duties were very humble, and salary yet more so. Though nominally a clerk, he was regarded as a kind of cross between a clerk and a messenger. Poor fellow! while his small salary had no prospect of increase, his large family increased but too fast. His remuneration for this piece of extra service was the surplus tea (some three or four pounds) contained in each chest, beyond the nominal amount.

Our success in tea led us on to buy coffee; and each time that our list went round the office more and more men asked leave to join. Our poor cupboard soon became too small for our ever increasing stocks, to which, moreover, we thought of adding sugar and other groceries. With no small anxiety we found ourselves constrained to hire a store-room outside the building, a step that we felt could not be safely taken unless we formed ourselves into a regular Association. Hence arose the Post-Office Supply Association, which, being afterwards extended to the whole of the Civil Service, in the end took the title of the "Civil Service Supply Association." Our first impulse was to call ourselves the "Post-Office Co-operative Society;" but even the boldest of us shrank from so hazardous an avowal—so strong only eight short years ago was the prejudice against Co-operation, regarded as it was by many as identical with Socialism. In a word, we took the thing but not the name.

A small committee of Post-Office men was formed; and after much anxious deliberation they resolved, and a daring step they thought it, to take a little room at a rent of twelve shillings a week, in the perhaps not over-fashionable neighbourhood of Bridgwater Square, Barbican.

The following is an extract from the original prospectus of the Association, now a very scarce and highly prized document :

This Association has been formed for the purpose of supplying officers of the Post Office and their friends with articles of all kinds, both for domestic consumption and general use, at the lowest wholesale prices.

The advantages of the scheme are obvious, but its full benefits can best be secured by a general combination in support of it on the part of the officers of the various departments.

It is intended that the articles mentioned in the accompanying price list shall be purchased by the Committee and distributed amongst the members. Arrangements for the supply of all other articles have been entered into with the Firms named in the accompanying list.

Even when the Association was fairly started, and carrying on its business on its own premises, the Committee did not venture to order any goods without ascertaining from the members what quantity of each article was needed. The business soon outgrew the room in Bridgwater Square, and the Committee, in a fit of extraordinary daring, engaged from a printer the upper floor of a small house in Bath Street, on the ground floor of which the worthy typographer carried on his own business. The memorable house wherein the third store (counting the original cupboard) was carried on, has long since been pulled down to make way for the new Post-Office buildings, but those who went there to co-operate in those early days must have a vivid recollection of the narrow staircase, where one was elbowed by printer's devils, and of the dark little rooms crowded with purchasers. Here, however, we stayed but a short time, the business growing so rapidly that within a very few months the Committee had again to seek larger premises, and this time, after making temporary use of some premises in Wood Street, they took a really desperate leap. After many a hunt for a house big enough to meet any probable increase of business, two of our Committee discovered a suitable one in Monkwell Street, a very narrow, out of the way thoroughfare near Cripplegate Church, and filled with confidence by past success, they took it on their own responsibility at a rent of 400*l.* a year. Great was the anxiety of the remainder of the Committee at this bold proceeding, though the intention was to sub-let the upper floor of the house to some Firm that should undertake to sell goods to the members at wholesale prices. Tenants were found in certain hosiers, relatives of one of the Post-Office clerks, and the arrangement worked fairly well for a time, but as soon as it could safely do so, the Committee regained possession of the floor, and undertook the sale of hosiery on its own account.

From this point the narrative, from being one of small beginnings, becomes the story of a large and rapidly increasing business.

First, the Committee obtained part of an adjoining house, then the whole of it, and after a time the other adjoining house, and part of a house on the opposite side of the street. A fresh house was taken in Villiers Street, and subsequently a larger one in Long Acre, for the

convenience of West End members. Before this time, a great pressure had been put upon the Committee to open a West End Store; but they would not then make the venture, and this, amongst other causes, led to the establishment of the sister Association, entitled "The Civil Service Co-operative Society," which has its stores in the Haymarket.

The City business of the Association will, during the present month, be removed to very large and handsome premises, near the Herald's College, in Queen Victoria Street, now building expressly for its use.

I have not mentioned the extreme difficulty which the Committee experienced in inducing wholesale houses to deal with the Association, especially when its doings found their way into print. Though ready money was always offered, together with good orders, most of the wholesale houses hung back, declaring that unless the orders were very large indeed, they should not feel warranted in encountering the fierce opposition of the retail traders. And now let us mark the consequences of this opposition. Very large orders being out of the question, so long as custom proceeded only from a limited number of persons, each of moderate income, and Civil Servants generally not yet joining in the movement, the Co-operators were obliged, in self-defence, to extend admission to quasi-membership beyond Civil Service bounds. Even this extraneous aid barely carried them through the struggle; the retailers having, over and over again, succeeded in deterring particular firms from supplying them with goods. These quasi-members, however, called by us "subscribers," were by no means admitted to any share in management, which indeed during the first year was strictly confined to a Post-Office Committee, though afterwards extended to representatives from the Civil Service generally. The exclusion of the general public from authority we have regarded as one of the chief causes of our success. Subscribers, however, by an annual payment of 5s., obtain all the commercial advantages enjoyed by full members, except that their purchases are not delivered carriage-free. The full members become so by taking each a 1*l*. share, of which, however, only 10s. has been called up. No one is allowed to hold more than a single share, nor are shares saleable or transferable in any way. On a member's death, his share is cancelled, and his deposit returned to his family. Until about a month ago any Civil Servant not below the rank of a clerk was eligible as a shareholder; but actual admission to the shareholding body required the approval of the Committee. The number of shareholders, which has largely increased during the last three or four years, is now about 4,200.

By the rules of the Association, any profits which may be made are to be spent in reducing the prices at which the goods are sold. Even in the outset, prices were not fixed higher than is deemed needful to cover the working expenses, which now amount to only 6 or 7 per cent. on the wholesale purchase price; but, of course, the Committee in its calculations has always taken good care to be well on the safe side. It is, perhaps, owing to extreme prudence in this matter, though, probably, still

more to the need felt for a considerable working capital, that the Association has gradually accumulated the sum of about 75,000*l.* The very magnitude of this capital has, however, proved a source of danger; for, without question, some persons have at different times obtained shares simply in the hope of breaking up the Association and getting a share of the spoil. Happily these unjustifiable attempts have hitherto always met with signal defeat, an overwhelming majority of the shareholders being determined to maintain the Association in honest and faithful accordance with the principles upon which it was founded.

At the last half-yearly meeting of the Association in April, a proposal was brought forward, to limit the shareholding body to the present number. After a prolonged and animated discussion, it was resolved to submit the proposal to the vote of the whole of the shareholders, which was taken by ballot. Out of the 4,200 shareholders only 1,200 voted, but of those who did vote there was a majority of 400 in favour of the proposal, which was accordingly carried. Of course, could the accumulated profits be divided, this limitation of the number of shareholders would give the shares a considerable value. Legal opinion, however, is entirely against the possibility of thus disposing of any past accumulations, which by the rules can only be spent in reducing the prices of articles sold. It is expected that those who have thus obtained a limitation of the shareholding body, will now endeavour to carry such an alteration in the rules as will allow future profits to be devoted to a Widow and Orphan Fund, or to some such purpose. Any change in the constitution of the Association, having for its object the benefit of the Civil Servants as distinguished from their friends the subscribers, is viewed with much anxiety and disfavour by most of the earlier members of the Society.

The number of subscribers is now limited to 15,000. Whilst this number furnishes a *clientèle* sufficiently strong to enable wholesale houses to disregard the retail traders, some check is placed upon the enlargement of the business, and consequent increase in the labour and responsibility of management.

The extraordinary rapidity with which the business has grown, will best be seen from the following table shewing the amount of sales at the stores during each year of the Association's existence, viz. :—

<i>Date.</i>	<i>Amount of Sales.</i>
1865	5,000 <i>l.</i>
1866	21,000 <i>l.</i>
1867	83,000 <i>l.</i>
1868	218,000 <i>l.</i>
1869	345,000 <i>l.</i>
1870	447,000 <i>l.</i>
1871	646,000 <i>l.</i>
1872	723,000 <i>l.</i>

During the half year ended March 31st last, the sales reached 392,000*l.*, being, therefore, at the rate of 784,000*l.* a year, viz. : for

grocery and wine, 410,000*l.*; for hosiery and clothing, 192,000*l.*; and for fancy goods, stationery, &c., 182,000*l.* At the present time about 8,100 lbs. of tea and about 15 tons of sugar are sold weekly.

The articles sold at the stores consist principally of groceries, cigars, and tobacco, wine and spirits, hosiery and drapery, stationery, books and music, watches and jewellery. But most of these articles, and, indeed, almost every other article of ordinary demand, can also be obtained by members and subscribers at low rates, though, of course, only for ready money, at all such warehouses and shops as have arrangements with us. The latest Quarterly Price List, which, from a single small sheet has grown to be a book of more than 200 pages, shews that the covenanted firms are not less than about 250, while the reduction promised in prices ranges from 5 to 25 per cent. It is believed that this additional business amounts, at least, to 800,000*l.*, and not improbably to as much as 1,000,000*l.* a year. Contrary to what might be expected, this part of the system works satisfactorily; for, though purchasers are invited to complain to the Committee if they ever have reason to suppose they do not obtain the full discount promised, few complaints are received. These, however, are all thoroughly examined, and whenever they prove to be well founded, the offending firm is struck off the list. Moreover, members soon learn from each other at what shops they are civilly and fairly treated, and act accordingly; so that some of the firms which have been connected with the Association from its early days, having gradually acquired a high reputation amongst us, are now doing a very large business with our members.

The members have the advantage of a tailoring department, carried on in Bedford Street, Strand, which, however, was for a long time a source of great trouble to the Committee. Much difficulty was experienced in getting, and still more in keeping, good workmen, who left in a mysterious manner; and the work was frequently so badly done as to convince the Committee that the workmen were being bribed to spoil the clothes entrusted to them, and thus to entail loss upon the Association. After a while, and by the exercise of great perseverance, these difficulties have all been overcome, and the tailoring department promises to be a great success.

Notwithstanding that the retail price of the articles sold at the Stores is on the average some 6 or 7 per cent. above the wholesale price, it happens every now and then that, owing to a rise in the market price between the publication of the quarterly price lists, the market price becomes higher than the retail price at the Stores. Unless the article is one of large general consumption, such as tea, the Committee adheres to its retail price until the issue of the next Quarterly Price List. This sometimes leads to an attempt by retail traders to buy up—of course through some subscriber willing to play false to the Association—all the stock in hand. During the Franco-German war an attempt was thus made to buy up all the Champagne, and not many months ago a

rapid rise in the market price of white pepper and of anchovies led to similar attempts with these articles. Large orders are never now executed without such inquiry as satisfies the Committee of their being made in good faith.

The Association directly employs about 400 people, and pays upwards of 48,000*l.* a year in salaries and wages. The stores in Long Acre stand at an annual rental of 600*l.*, whilst for the new stores in Queen Victoria Street the mere ground rent is no less than 1,400*l.* The premises themselves we are about to purchase for 15,000*l.*, while a further rent of 200*l.* a year is paid for a warehouse at Ward's Wharf; where are kept large stocks of every article in the price list, and where are executed all large orders for goods. Something has been said as to the causes of our well-doing, but it seems desirable to inquire further into the reason of success so unprecedented. The Association is now one of the largest buyers and sellers in England, nay, in the world; and yet it was commenced and has been carried on by a body of men who in their ordinary employment neither buy nor sell. Moreover, the *personnel* of the Committee so changes, that at the present time there is left upon it but one of the original members, while every fresh Committee-man, of course, has to learn the very A B C of commercial business. For explanation, I believe we may fairly point first to the high sense of honour which pervades the Government service, and which always renders it easy to find abundance of men whose integrity is above suspicion;—secondly, to the admirable training for business (*viz.*, the adaptation of means to an end, as Mr. Walter Bagehot happily defines it) which the Post-Office service affords;—and thirdly, to the corporate nature of the Civil Service. In the establishment of almost every ordinary trading company, as it seems to me, the promoters aim at some advantage for themselves and their friends beyond what is avowed, getting perhaps a larger allotment of shares, or obtaining them on more favourable terms than the general public, or at least securing appointments for their nominees. Indeed, so general is this practice, that it would, I suppose, be impossible to persuade the public that a company had been formed on such a footing as to give equal benefit to every individual shareholder. On the other hand, when the Civil Service Supply Association was formed, not only did not the originators of it obtain any special benefit for themselves, but no one ever imagined that they did. During the eight years that the Association has been in existence, though nearly 2,500,000*l.* have passed through the Committee's hands, there has arisen, so far as I know, no suspicion whatever of any dishonesty, or even of any questionable dealing.

As I have before stated, the Association originated and was organised in the Post Office—a department which, under the guidance and control of Sir Rowland Hill, had seen a great rise of able and energetic men. Even in earlier days, Post Office men had of course taken constant part in a vast and complex business; but the introduction of penny-postage had

prodigiously enlarged this business in all its branches. Moreover, Sir Rowland's system of management—particularly his bold application of the principle of promotion by merit instead of by seniority—had not only advanced able men to important posts, but had brought out throughout the service powers previously latent. Mr. Seudamore, in a recent lecture, stated that the indirect results of Sir Rowland's postal reforms have been even greater than the direct. Amongst these indirect results, as due to the general spirit of activity and enterprise thus engendered, may, I believe, be reckoned the establishment of the Civil Service Supply Association and the kindred societies which this has called into life.

Another main element of success is the corporate nature of the Post-Office, and of the Civil Service generally. This provided a large business connexion, already linked together and accessible without the aid of advertisements, so soon as the value of the Association was proved. Moreover, there was a special guarantee for integrity. Every one in the Post-Office either knows or can easily know something of every brother officer of whatever rank, and this holds good, though perhaps in a lesser degree, of every Government department. Every Committee-man has felt that his reputation as a Civil Servant was of far too great a value to be endangered by any unfair dealing in the affairs of the Association; the motive to rectitude being so strong, that to put men of even moderately good official standing on the Committee was to render it certain that the work would be honestly and diligently done. While, however, the Association has thus far succeeded so admirably, it seems to me that its future course is not free from danger.

The shareholding body, composed as it is of upwards of 4,000 Civil Servants from all branches of the Service, who have been admitted to membership without any reference to their fitness for the position, has sometimes proved very unruly. Latterly, however, the introduction of the plan of voting by proxy has greatly reduced the power of the comparatively small fraction of shareholders who are disposed to be troublesome.

The pay of the Committee, too, for duties involving much sacrifice of well-earned leisure, considerable labour, and great responsibility, is very low. So long as salaries are limited to 80*l.* or 90*l.* a year, the Committee must remain a too changeable body, since capable men cannot be permanently retained on such terms. Hitherto the Association has been mainly served by men whose chief motives were pride in its success, and a desire to benefit their fellow-officers, but of course this will not last. The time must come when the chief inducement to such service will be the desire of adding to income: nor should it be expected that the Association will be maintained in full vigour, unless the payment to the Committee be made sufficient to induce well qualified men to serve mainly as a matter of business.

A reduction in the shareholding body, with a limitation of it to suitable persons, is now out of the question. Many of us Post-Office men thought, and still think, that a great mistake was made in not resolutely

retaining the control of the Association in the Post-Office service; though, of course, we quite approved of admitting the remainder of the Civil Service to all the other advantages of membership. I feel no doubt that should the present Association ever collapse, the Post-Office men would rapidly and successfully organise a new society on the plan of keeping the control in the hands of a moderate number of trustworthy and reasonable men of their service.

About two years ago, when our Association limited the number of subscribers to 15,000, a new society entitled "The New Supply Association" was projected to take in those friends of Civil Servants and others who could not gain admission to the old. Several of the then members of our Committee joined the direction of the new Association, which is conducted upon the same general principles as our own. I see by the first annual report that the Association, which has its stores in Long Acre, has during the past twelve months sold 20,000*l.* worth of goods to its members, so that it has made a good commencement.

I must mention, in conclusion, that I have never served, and certainly never intend to serve, on the Committee of Management myself, although I have had the opportunity of watching its work from the commencement to the present time.

A POST-OFFICE MAN.

The Brontës.

No soil has the monopoly of Genius. Alike in the barbaric empires of the East and the Christian nations of the West, we behold numberless proofs and monuments of that force which has been irresistible in bursting the narrow bounds by which it was sought to be confined, and which men call Genius. This power, or adaptability, or whatever name is chosen to be given to it, is seen to be independent of the conditions which affect men generally, or at least it rises superior to them; it is a law to itself; in the world's darkest ages it has endeavoured to pierce the secrets of the universe, and has uttered language which has been the seed of wisdom for succeeding generations. Humanity has been more indissolubly knit together, and the gulf of time bridged over, by a Confucius and a Bacon. Truly independent, indeed, of the accidents of time or place, "the light that never was on land or sea,"—to give a broad application to Wordsworth's graphic expression—beams forth upon all ages and peoples, but in gleams as fitful as the lightning which cleaves the dense thunder-cloud. The greatest unbroken succession of the earth is this same genius, yielding those potentialities which have operated for the evil or the good of mankind. Wars and enthusiasms have been kindled by it, and dying hopes have been revived by its life-giving influence. It cannot die. Its light may be obscured, but never extinguished. Where the Divine spark exists it must become manifest, for it is imperishable.

But our present purpose is to look at genius from a point which possesses even more of interest than its imperishability. It is to note its appearance in scenes which it has ever favoured, and where it has always disappointed the world. How frequently in history has it taken up its abode in the most unpromising soil, where there seemed no root for its rare and extraordinary growth! Where nature has most darkly frowned, and the sterile aspect of her moors and hills has had a corresponding influence upon the population, thence have sprung some of the choicest spirits, whose lives were fragrant, and whose memories still

Smell sweet and blossom in the dust.

Perhaps no example could be cited in our literary annals which more clearly demonstrates the irrepressibility of genius than that of the remarkable trio of sisters who were known originally as Currer, Ellis, and Acton

Bell. The truly surprising vigour of their mental constitutions can only be accurately gauged by a consideration of the natural and other disadvantages which they successfully overcame. To many persons, we suppose, they will ever remain but a name, though one almost synonymous with sturdy independence of character; but to those who more deeply study their separate individualities an untold wealth of interest and profit will be discovered. Their life's history proves that in the most barren regions the power of genius can flourish. The bleak, wild moorlands, with their poverty of natural beauties, were the nursery of rich lives, whose influence—with that of all other lives to whom the Divinity has intimately spoken—still lives, and must live, for long generations. The personal narrative, as related by Mrs. Gaskell, is one of mingled pathos and rarity. Some of the points in the Life of Charlotte Brontë it will be advisable to recall to the reader's attention before the works of the three sisters themselves are passed in review. Haworth village, whose parsonage was so long the residence of the Brontës, is in the West Riding of Yorkshire, and situate only a few miles from three towns of considerable importance—Halifax, Bradford, and Keighley. The friend of Charlotte Brontë has endeavoured to give some idea of the appearance of the district, but even she fails to depicture it as it existed in the early part of the present century. In addition to the dull, monotonous stretch of moorland, with here and there a "beck" or a crag, as the sole variation for the weary eye, there was a population to be met with which in some respects exhibited no advance whatever over that of the Middle Ages. Nor is this scarcely to be wondered at, for within the knowledge of the present writer, to whom the whole locality is perfectly familiar, there were living a few years ago individuals who had never beheld one of the foremost powers of civilisation—the railway. Great natural shrewdness undoubtedly was a characteristic of the inhabitants of the Riding, and in many cases a rough kind of *bonhomie* was added, which, however, was frequently made more offensive than positive rudeness. Add to this that there was very little opportunity afforded to the poor for culture—twelve, fourteen, and sixteen hours per day being their constant labour at the factories—and the imagination will have little left to do in forming an estimate of the exoteric existence of the Yorkshire character. The people were, and indeed now are, hard-fisted, but scarcely so much so as the reader of Mrs. Gaskell would gather; for many have a passion for personal adornment, whilst others will spend considerable time and money in attaining proficiency in music, for which they have a natural talent beyond that possessed by the inhabitants of any other county in England. They are good friends and good haters. The misers, mostly, are to be found in the type of small manufacturers or cotton-spinners, who, bereft of many of those graces which should adorn the human character, set themselves with dogged persistency to the making of "brass," as they term wealth. With some the passion is carried to a lamentable, and at the same time amusing excess. A characteristic story is told of a person of this class,

who was tolerably rich, and had been seized with illness soon after taking out his policy. When the doctor made him aware of his hopeless state, he jumped up delighted, shouting, "By Jingo! I shall *do* the insurance company! I always was a lucky fellow!" Another trait in people much poorer in station than those just referred to was the fixedness of their religious principles. The doctrine of Election had firmer root in their minds—and indeed has now in those of their successors—than is found to be the case elsewhere. The factory hands would stand at the loom till nature yielded to consumption or to the hardness of the burdens it was called upon to bear, but in the hour of dissolution, as in every hour of sentient existence in the past, would be apparent the conviction that as surely as the sun rose in the morning, so surely were they themselves predestinated to a triumphant salvation, of which it was an impossibility they could be rifed by the combined powers of the universe. Amidst this stern and unyielding race, then, was the lot of the sisters cast, and it would have been strange had not their genius been directed in its moulding by such distinctive surroundings. To understand at all the spirit of their works, it is necessary to have some preliminary knowledge of the kind just indicated. Precocity distinguished the whole trio, though that is not an unailing sign of future celebrity. When children, their answers to questions were clever and characteristic. Emily, whose intellect was always singularly clear, firm, and logical, when asked what should be done with her brother Branwell, if he should be naughty, instantly replied, "Reason with him, and when he won't listen to reason whip him." And as another indication of the quick ripening of faculties in this remarkable family, it may be mentioned that Mr. Brontë said he could converse with his daughter Maria on all the leading questions of the day when she was only eleven years of age. Early familiar with all the forms of suffering and death, the life of Charlotte Brontë from its commencement to its close may be said to have been one prolonged endurance of agony. Yet the grandeur of her courage must always strike us as one of the sublimest spectacles. When a child she lost those who were dear to her, and there were none who could understand the vast yearnings of her nature. Then came the stirrings of her genius, and she longed to take flight, but her wings were weighted, and she was kept enchained to the dull earth. A few more years, and another trouble, almost worse than death, cast its horrible shadow over her path. The melancholy story of her brother Branwell, whom she loved deeply, in spite of his numberless errors and terrible slavery to one master-passion, is matter of general knowledge. To his end succeeded that of Emily Brontë, the sister whom Charlotte especially loved. To see her drift out into the great Unknown Sea was trouble inexpressible to that loving soul, which had watched her with fostering care, and hoped to have witnessed the universal acknowledgment of her splendid genius. Seldom was the heavy cloud lifted from the head of our author on those dull Yorkshire hills: can it be matter of surprise, then, that her works should bear the impress of the character of her life?

The wonder is, that the sun should break through at all, as it does in *Shirley*, with beams of real geniality and cheerfulness. But the life was destructive of that gentler kind of humour of which we are sure Charlotte Brontë must have had originally a considerable endowment. She was necessarily propelled towards the painting of what was frequently harsh, and always peculiar and extraordinary. Her perceptions were keen—as will be admitted by the close student of her works—not only of human life, but of nature, and what she wrote must therefore exhibit the qualities of truth and strength. Severe discipline waited upon her through all her history, and its results are graphically depicted in her works, each of which deals with the experience of some stage of her brief existence. One almost wonders, as we follow her career, where her happiness came from. There was no society, no wealth, none of the common delights of life for her, whilst death was always approaching with measured, but inevitable steps, when not, indeed, already in the house. Doubtless her literary occupations yielded her at times intense enjoyment, but she possessed, in addition, a faith in Providence which must have been like that of a child for simplicity and strength—a faith to which many, who boasted of their Christian excellence, were perfect strangers, and to whom its existence in her was utterly unsuspected.

The iron will of this truly great woman was never broken till the period came when she must yield up her own life. Then the weakness—if such it can be called—which she exhibited, arose not from any fear respecting herself, but for the tender and faithful husband whom she was leaving behind. Desolation, blank and utter, overtook the father and husband when her heart ceased to beat, such as the old parsonage had never experienced before. Charlotte's spirit had nerved others so long as it was with them, and the tenement of hope was not completely shattered till she died. The picture Mrs. Gaskell gives of the closing moments and of the funeral is very touching. With regard to the latter it painfully reminded her of the scene after the death of Oliver Goldsmith. Mr. Forster thus describes it:—"The staircase of Brick Court is said to have been filled with mourners, the reverse of domestic; women without a home, without domesticity of any kind, with no friend but him they had come to weep for; outcasts of that great solitary, wicked city, to whom he had never forgotten to be kind and charitable." Such would have followed Charlotte Brontë's remains to the grave, but the survivors wanted not the sympathy of strangers, their grief being too keen to be assuaged. The detractors of the writer of *Jane Eyre* could have had little real understanding of her. Those who knew her best were the fallen and distressed, to whose wants she had ministered, and, better still, into whose bruised and dejected souls she had poured the sweet balm of sympathy. Such shall judge the woman; as for her genius, that will take care of itself; its fruits are too genuine to be in danger of perishing.

The novels of Charlotte Brontë were totally dissimilar in style to all which had been previously given to the world, and their quality was not

such as to be at the first moment attractive. Masculine in their strength, and very largely so in the cast of thought, there could be no wonder that the public should assume Currer Bell to be of the sterner sex, and even persist in its delusion after the most express assurance to the contrary. Certainly one can sympathise with the feeling of astonishment that *Jane Eyre* should have been written by a woman. What vigour there is in it compared with the novels of another great artist, Miss Austen ! For sheer force she has even eclipsed her own chief of novel-writers, Sir Walter Scott, whilst Balzac, who, as Currer Bell said, "always left a nasty taste in her mouth," is also outstripped in the delineation of passion. Many readers were doubtless repulsed from a fair and candid perusal of the works of Charlotte Brontë by certain adverse criticisms which had pronounced them extremely coarse. The unfairness of this charge we think it will not be difficult to show presently. Faithful transcripts of the life she had witnessed they certainly were ; distorted they were not. Speaking of fiction, the author of *The Curiosities of Literature* has said—"Novels, as they were long *manufactured*, form a library of illiterate authors for illiterate readers ; but as they are *created* by genius, are precious to the philosopher. They paint the character of an individual or the manners of the age more perfectly than any other species of composition : it is in novels we observe, as it were passing under our own eyes, the refined frivolity of the French, the gloomy and disordered sensibility of the German ; and the petty intrigues of the modern Italian in some Venetian novels." We accept this as a tolerably substantial appraisal of the rôle of the novelist ; but in order to be strengthened in our opinion, let us look at what the eminent philosopher Adam Smith said of the true novelist, and surely no higher praise could be desired by our story-writers. "The poets and romance-writers who," he says, "best paint the refinements and delicacies of love and friendship, and of all other private and domestic affections, Racine and Voltaire, Richardson, Marivaux, and Riccoboni, are in this case much better instructors than Zeno, Chrysippus, or Epictetus." But surely we need not stay to argue here that the novel, when in the hands of a true genius, can be made one of the best instructors of the human race. It is so because there is nothing of the abstract about it—which the mind of mankind generally abhors ; it is a record of the concrete existence of individuals like ourselves, and must therefore be profitable both for amusement, interest, and guidance. A good novelist can scarcely be appreciated too highly. In this class we place Charlotte Brontë ; she fulfils the requirements glanced at already in the words of Mr. D'Israeli, and is in every respect a faithful delineator of the scenes and persons she professes to describe. How faithful, indeed, few can scarcely tell, but the mass can darkly feel it on close acquaintance with her. The charge of coarseness brought against her works she herself indignantly repelled, but the base notion of such a charge must have cruelly wounded her spirit, which, though strong and brave as a lion, was yet pure and tender as that of a child. She said, "I trust God will take from me whatever power of

invention or expression I may have, before He lets me become blind to the sense of what is fitting or unfitting to be said." And it is on record that she was deeply grieved and long distressed by the remark made to her on one occasion, "You know, you and I, Miss Brontë, have both written naughty books!" Mrs. Gaskell goes so far as to admit that there are passages in the writings of Currer Bell which are coarse; for ourselves, we can scarcely understand what is meant. Roughness there is, but indecency none, and coarseness seems to us to imply a little more than mere roughness. Several of the characters she has drawn are reproductions in type of the wildest natures, and the over-refined sensibilities of some readers are possibly shocked by their extreme naturalness. Charlotte Brontë simply thought of painting them as they appeared, never thinking for a moment there could be harm in laying in deep shadows where deep shadows were required. Fielding was coarse, Wycherley and some of the other dramatists more so, but their examples show that coarseness is an unfortunate epithet to apply to the writings of Currer Bell. If applicable to them, it is totally inapplicable to her. Her coarseness—if such quality exist at all—was undetachable from her subjects. She would have ceased to be the true delineator and the real artist she aspired to be, had she swerved from the outlines of character she undertook to fill in. In truth, we need only turn to *Shirley* and *Jane Eyre* to prove the position that Charlotte Brontë was far beyond the common novelist. In the former story we have characters which for sweetness have been rarely excelled, whilst in the latter we have a Jupiter of rugged strength and passion. The novelist has power to go out of herself—that attribute of the great artist. It is genius which impels, and she must obey. If the characters are occasionally coarse, she is unconscious of it; she is only aware of their truth. No need for her to lop off the distorted branches in the human forest of her delineations in order to secure a level growth of mediocrity. She could not if she would, and is too intent on the manifestations of nature to do so if she could. Such creations as please the ordinary romance-monger would be an abhorrence to her; it is because she exalted Art that she could not depart from the True, with which the former, when real, is ever in unison.

The Professor, which was the first work written by Charlotte Brontë ostensibly for publication, though not by any means her first effort in fiction (what author does not carry the recollection of many juvenile crudities?), exhibits a great amount of conscious power, but also an inability on the part of the writer to give herself free scope. A comparison between this and succeeding works will show how she was cramped in its composition. The story is good, nevertheless, though numerous publishers to whom it was submitted decided otherwise. Its author has possibly hit upon the reason for its rejection, when in the preface she says she determined to give her hero no adventitious aid or success whatever. He was to succeed, if he did so, by the sheer force of his own brain and labour. "As Adam's son he should share Adam's doom,

and drain throughout life a mixed and moderate cup of enjoyment." These principles were of course unpopular; the novel-readers of the day demanded something which should exhibit more of the romantic and the heroic. Battling well, however, with materials which were in the outset obstructive, Currer Bell achieved a substantial success. There can be no doubt that her husband, in consenting to the publication of the volume subsequently, did a wise act. There is much in the work which is characteristic of its author as she appears in her later novels, and the drawing of at least one of the characters, Mr. Hunsden, is masterly. Some of the materials, we are told, were afterwards used in *Villette*; but if so they are carefully disguised, and the world could very well afford to welcome the two. Passages occur in *The Professor* which are almost startling in their strength of passion and eloquence, and which alone would have given to Currer Bell the stamp of originality. All the toil-some way by which the person who gives the title to the volume is led, is marked by the intensest sympathy on the part of the author, and although the reader may not be able to feel much personal enthusiasm in the various characters, he must at once yield the point that he is perusing the thoughts of no common mind. The valuable knowledge which the author acquired abroad is utilised with considerable skill, whilst she is equally at home when she comes to delineate the Yorkshire family of the Crimsworths. Her ideas of love and marriage, afterwards so fully developed in her other novels, are here touched upon. "I am no Oriental," says the Professor: "white necks, carmine lips and cheeks, clusters of bright curls, do not suffice for me, without that Promethean spark, which will live after the roses and lilies are faded, the burnished hair grown gray. In sunshine, in prosperity, the flowers are very well; but how many wet days are there in life—November seasons of disaster—when a man's hearth and home would be cold, indeed, without the clear, cheering gleam of intellect?" Love without the union of souls, the author again and again insists, is a delusion, the sheen of a summer's day, and quite as fleeting. Altogether the idea of *The Professor* was new, and as an indication of the grooves in which its author's genius was afterwards to run, we would not willingly have lost it. As a psychological study alone it was well worthy of preservation.

But better and more remarkable works followed. The reading world has very seldom been startled by such a genuine and powerful piece of originality as *Jane Eyre*. One can almost gauge the feeling, after reading it, which caused Charlotte Brontë to be such an enthusiastic admirer of Thackeray. He, at any rate, she knew, would appreciate her efforts, for was he not also engaged (with even more splendid talents) in the crusade against conventionality? He, at least, understood her burning words, when she affirmed that "conventionality is not morality, self-righteousness is not religion. To attack the first is not to assail the last. To pluck the mask from the face of the Pharisee, is not to lift an impious hand to the Crown of Thorns." These words will sufficiently show how

she endeavoured to tread in the steps of "the first social regenerator of the day," and to whom she inscribed the second edition of her most widely known book. *Jane Eyre* is an autobiography, and its intention is to present a plain, unbiassed narrative of a woman's life from its commencement to a period when it is supposed to have ceased to possess interest to mankind generally. It is told fearlessly, and with a burning pen. But there is no *suppressio veri*; that, its author would have scorned: perhaps it would have been better for its reception in some quarters—limited in range we are happy to think—if the narrator of the story had glossed over some portions of her heroine's history. She has chosen, however, to adhere to stern reality, and there it is finally for us, unpleasant and rough though it be in some of its recorded experiences. The book shows the most opposite qualities—light, darkness; beauty, deformity; strength, tenderness. Its pathos is of the finest quality, stirring most deeply because it is simple and unforced. The situations are very vivid; several scenes being depicted which it would be impossible to eradicate from the memory after the most extensive reading of serial literature. Even those who regard it as coarse must admit its strange fascination. It was a book that could afford to be independent of criticism, and accordingly we find that, before the reviews appeared, anxious and continuous inquiries respecting it began to be made at the libraries. There was not much fiction being written which fixed the public eye, and the issue of this novel almost created an era. Forgotten now is the savage criticism of the reviewer who said of the author of *Jane Eyre*, "She must be one who for some sufficient reason has long forfeited the society of her sex," whilst the work which baffled his judgment, but earned his vituperation, still remains, a memento of real genius which could not be suppressed. Although chiefly remarkable for its prominent delineation of the passion of love in strong and impulsive natures, there are many other points which are noticeable about it, and should therefore be mentioned. The keen observation of the writer is manifest on almost every page. Intense realism is its chief characteristic. The pictures are as vivid and bold as though etched by a Rembrandt, or drawn by a Salvator Rosa. Dickens has been almost equalled by the description of the school at Lowood, to which Miss Eyre was sent, and which might well be described as Dotheboys' Hall. Here, however—melancholy lot!—in addition to indifferent food, supplied in very limited quantities, there was a good deal of threatening about "damnation." The hypocritical minister, Mr. Brocklehurst, had sometimes the worst of it in his dealings with Jane Eyre, as, for instance, in this: "What is hell?" "A pit full of fire." "What must you do to avoid it?" The answer was a little objectionable, as the autobiographer says—"I must keep in good health and not die." As a corrective, she had given to her to read *The Child's Guide*, containing "an account of the awfully sudden death of Martha G——, a naughty child addicted to falsehood and deceit." Certainly if this mental pabulum, combined with the

material one of nauseous burnt porridge, was not potent in keeping down the old Adam, it would be impossible to mention an effectual remedy, one would think. As the story progresses it becomes most thrilling, and we are introduced to a character which is frequently regarded, and not without reason, as Currer Bell's masterpiece of powerful drawing, viz. Mr. Rochester. Strong and yet weak, a very thunderbolt for strength and explosiveness, and yet a bundle of ordinary human weaknesses, this individual stands forth as real and living a portrait as is to be found existing in word-painting. He is attractive in spite of his numerous faults, and where is the character who more stood in need of pity? Picture him at Thornfield, united in wedlock to a raving maniac, who in her paroxysms attempted his life, whilst he, in return, saved hers—that very life which was a curse, and brought unutterable gloom to him. Then, too, he saw the form that he loved, but could not retain, and yet felt the movement of a wicked but ineffable love towards her—wicked, because of the tie which bound him to the wild being who bore his name. Add to all this that his nature was as sensitive as it was intense, and where is the person who could not pity Fairfax Rochester? Behold him again after he has been maimed in the fruitless endeavour to save the maniac from death. He describes himself as “no better than the old lightning-struck chestnut-tree in Thornfield orchard;” but is the process of purification to be counted as nothing which has brought about this result?—

“Jane! you think me an irreligious dog, I dare say; but my heart swells with gratitude to the beneficent God of this earth just now. He sees not as man sees, but far clearer; judges not as man judges, but far more wisely. I did wrong: I would have sullied my innocent flower—breathed guilt on its purity; the Omnipotent snatched it from me. I, in my stiff-necked rebellion, almost cursed the dispensation: instead of bending to the decree, I defied it. Divine justice pursued its course; disasters came thick on me: I was forced to pass through the valley of the shadow of death. His chastisements are mighty, and one smote me which has humbled me for ever. You know I was proud of my strength, but what is it now when I must give it over to foreign guidance as a child does its weakness? Of late, Jane—only—only of late—I began to see and acknowledge the hand of God in my doom. I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconciliation to my Maker. I began sometimes to pray; very brief prayers they were, but very sincere.”

Verily, this is the epitome of an experience worthy of being sympathised with, and valuable to be written.

There can be no doubt that the first and greatest cause of the extreme vividness of the writings of Charlotte Brontë and her sisters is the fact that most of the characters depicted are as faithful copies from real life as though an artist had sat down and limned their features. More so: for the artist has nothing to do with psychological characteristics, which, in the case of the authors, are as accurately described as the features. Having fixed upon their subjects for analysis, they clung to them like a shadow or a second self, and the very isolation by which they were surrounded lent strength to their conceptions. The characters are true to their respective natures, and their final ends are fearlessly worked out. Having spoken of

the book which made the fame of Charlotte Brontë, let us glance at her next most important work, and the one which we like best of all—*Shirley*. It opens with a chapter in which a vein of humour unsuspected in Charlotte Brontë is manifested, and we know of no other author whose sketches so much remind us of George Eliot as this delineation of the three curates. The writer has completely unbent, relaxed from the severity which so greatly predominates in her other works, and given play to a quiet and yet quaint drollery which is positively irresistible. A little further on, however, we come to more serious business; and the terrible machinery riots which so disastrously retarded commercial progress at the period at which this history is fixed, afford excellent scope for those graphic descriptions in which Currer Bell stands almost unrivalled. The West Riding of Yorkshire, and some parts of Lancashire, were especially subjected to hardships and *émeutes* on account of these improvements and inventions in manufacture, and the sketch of Robert Moore's campaign against the bigoted factory operatives in his employ and that of his neighbours is only a fancy one as regards the disposition of the events. Such things were common at the time of the Luddite riots, but in adopting these riots as the foundation of her story, the author also took characters living in her own day and at her own door, so to speak, hoping that they would thus pass unrecognised. But the fact that the riots occurred thirty years previously did not blind the people portrayed to the knowledge that they were gazing upon their own portraits. The Yorkes, the three curates, and Mrs. Prior are all portraits, whilst Shirley herself is Emily Brontë idealised, or rather what Emily would have been had she been placed in different circumstances. Though the book is singularly strong in individualities, there is, further, more general merit in its writing. Its scenic effects are beautiful; the deep love of nature which possessed the soul of Currer Bell is more observable here than elsewhere. It is what we should describe as a novel good "all round." It has no weak side; it is the most perfect piece of writing the author has left behind her. There is not the terrible sweep of passion we see in *Jane Eyre*; the roughnesses of life are smoothed down a little, and it seems altogether more humanised and humanising. The most opposite events are touched upon skilfully. Who can forget, for instance, the description of the revival in the new Wesleyan Chapel at Briarfield, when "Doad o' Bill's" announced positively that he had "fun' (found) liberty," and the excitement amongst the brethren was intense. Why can't these worthy people take their religion a little more quietly? As our author says on this occasion, "the roof of the chapel did not fly off; which speaks volumes in praise of its solid slating." A little further on we get another sample of power, occurring in the description of a female character. "Nature made her in the mood in which she makes her briars and thorns; whereas for the creation of some women she reserves the May morning hours, when with light and dew she woos the primrose from the turf, and the lily from the woodmoss." Again, we find in this novel that although Currer

Bell was not a great poetess through the usual medium of measured cadence, she could write fine, genuine poetry in a prose setting. Witness the following description of nature put into the mouth of Shirley :—

"I saw—I now see—a woman-Titan: her robe of blue air spreads to the outskirts of the heath where yonder flock is grazing; a veil, white as an avalanche, sweeps from her head to her feet, and arabesques of lightning flame on its borders. Under her breast I see her zone, purple like that horizon; through its blush shines the star of evening. Her steady eyes I cannot picture; they are clear—they are deep as lakes—they are lifted and full of worship—they tremble with the softness of love and the lustre of prayer. Her forehead has the expanse of a cloud, and is paler than the early moon, risen long before dark gathers; she reclines her bosom on the ridge of Stillbro' Moor; her mighty hands are joined beneath it. So kneeling, face to face she speaks with God. That Eve is Jehovah's daughter, as Adam was his son."

Our young poets might well covet a power of poetic description like this. As with all true poetry, there is not only the form but the halo. The expression, coming as it did from the feeling, begets in us the feeling again. Other passages of equal beauty could be culled from *Shirley*, gems glittering here and there in a great broad field. Nature, love, happiness, misery, loss, gain, are the themes dilated upon, on each of which much is given to delight, to improve, and to engender sympathy. Charlotte Brontë exhibits a marked contrast in one respect to the greatest female novelist at present living, and perhaps *Shirley* is the clearest example of what we mean. Her faith is unwavering—faith in the Unseen. But because He is Unseen she would teach us that that is no reason why He should be Unknown. Neither does she form impossible ideals. Shirley is as grand a character in her way as Dorothea Brooke, but we can comprehend her better. And though Shirley's soul was deep, and she had yearnings after greatness, her hopes were not placed beyond fruition, as in the case of Dorothea. The former says: "Indisputably, a great, good, handsome man is the first of created things. I would scorn to contend for empire with him. Shall my left hand dispute for precedence with my right?—shall my heart quarrel with my pulse?—shall my veins be jealous of the blood which fills them?" Some feeling of this kind, of course, Dorothea indulged towards Mr. Casaubon; but in her case the idol is shattered, whilst Shirley obtains in the love of Louis Moore all that she craves for. It was Dorothea's fate to be always finding humanity fail, and created things insufficient to fill the void in her nature. In this sense Shirley is the superior character. Besides her love, she had a truer insight into the means of procuring happiness. She discovered that it must sometimes be worked for with her own hands. Thus, then, was her nature completely rounded. With reverence to the Supreme were added his richest gift of love and the link of benevolence to bind her to the rest of mankind. Not so serenely beautiful as Dorothea, and not perhaps so lofty in intellect, she is yet a more successful character. On her forehead there is not written—failure.

If the sisters Brontë had early in life been accustomed to mingle in so-

ciety, and had not been imprisoned within the walls of Haworth parsonage, there can be little question that we should have had more masterly and more general works from their hands. The skill they exhibit in delineating life should not have been confined to the inhabitants of those northern moors, but should have been employed in other haunts and other scenes likewise. Their field has been necessarily restricted, though their genius had full play on the subjects within their reach. But to demonstrate the capacity to turn experience to account wherever it might be obtained, we only need to direct the reader's attention to Charlotte Brontë's latest work, *Villette*. It is redolent of the flavour of Brussels, where the author and her sister spent some years of their lives. To the ordinary English reader it is probably the most uninteresting of all the works of Miss Brontë, as page after page is composed mostly of French, and that sometimes difficult and idiomatic. This doubtless operated to some extent against its popularity with the mass of novel-readers, though the book seems to have earned the most lavish encomiums from the critics. It exhibits, however, the genius neither of *Jane Eyre* nor of *Shirley*: it is, in truth, superior to the fiction of ninety per cent. of novelists, but it scarcely warranted the extravagant terms of praise which were showered upon it by the reviewers. These valuable individuals, however, were, as is too often the case unfortunately, wise after the event—that is, they found it tolerably safe to eulogise a new work from the hand of one who had already established her position as amongst the most original writers of the age. One or two of the *dramatis personæ* evoke sentiments of approval on account of their originality, conspicuous amongst them being Mr. Paul Emanuel and Miss de Bassompierre; but on the whole, the book is disappointing, for there is no one character whose fortunes we are anxious to follow; and a novel which fails to beget a personal interest must be said to have lost its chief charm.

Emily Brontë—for it is now time that we should say something of the two other persons in this remarkable trio—was, in certain respects, the most extraordinary of the three sisters. She has this distinction at any rate, that she has written a book which stands as completely alone in the language as does the *Paradise Lost* or the *Pilgrim's Progress*. This of itself, setting aside subject and construction, is no mean eminence. Emily Jane Brontë, as is well known, was the youngest but one of the Rev. Mr. Brontë's children, and died before she was thirty years of age. Early in life she displayed a singularly masculine bent of intellect, and astonished those with whom she came in contact by her penetration, and that settlement of character which generally only comes with age. She went from home twice, once to school and once to Brussels, but it was like the caging of a lioness, and her soul yearned for the liberty of home. When in Brussels she attracted and impressed deeply all those who came across her, and M. Heger declared she should have been a man, for "her powerful reason would have deduced new spheres of discovery from the knowledge of the old, and her strong, imperious will would never have

been daunted by opposition or difficulty : never have given way but with life." On her return to Haworth she began to lose in beauty but to gain in impressiveness of feature, and she divided her time between homely domestic duties, studies, and rambles. Shrinking entirely from contact with the life which surrounded her, she gave herself up to nature, the result being apparent in her works, which reveal a most intimate acquaintance with the great Mother in all her moods. Her mind was absolutely free to all the lessons which she should teach, and she embraced them with the most passionate longing. " Her native hills were far more to her than a spectacle ; they were what she lived in, and by, as much as the wild birds, their tenants, or as the heather, their produce." Her descriptions, then, of natural scenery, are what they should be, and all they should be. Any reader of her works must perforce acknowledge the accuracy of these observations. Her life, however, seemed to be an unprized one, except by that sister who loved her profoundly, and who keenly appreciated her genius as it essayed to unfold its wings in the sun. But whilst she lived the world made no sign of recognition of her strangely weird powers. When illness came her indomitable will still enabled her to present an unflinching front to sympathising friends. She refused to see the doctor, and would not have it that she was ill. To the last she retained an independent spirit, and on the day of her death she arose and dressed herself as usual. Her end reminds us of that of her brother Branwell whose will was so strong that he insisted on standing up to die and did actually so die. Emily did everything for herself on that last day, but as the hours drew on got manifestly worse, and could only whisper in gasps. The end came when it was too late to profit by human skill. *Wuthering Heights*, the principal work she has left behind her, shows a massive strength which is of the rarest description. Its power is absolutely Titanic : from the first page to the last it reads like the intellectual throes of a giant. It is fearful, it is true, and perhaps one of the most unpleasant books ever written : but we stand in amaze at the almost incredible fact that it was written by a slim country girl who would have passed in a crowd as an insignificant person, and who had had little or no experience of the ways of the world. In *Heathcliff*, Emily Brontë has drawn the greatest villain extant, after Iago. He has no match out of Shakspeare. The Mephistopheles of Goethe's *Faust* is a person of gentlemanly proclivities compared with *Heathcliff*. There is not a redeeming quality in him ; his coarseness is very repellent ; he is a unique specimen of the human tiger. Charlotte Brontë in her digest of this character finds one ameliorating circumstance in his favour, one link which connects him with humanity—viz., his regard for one of his victims, Hareton Earnshaw. But we cannot agree with her : his feeling towards Earnshaw is excessively like that feline affection which sometimes destroys its own offspring. As to his alleged esteem for Nelly Dean, perhaps also the less said about that the better. But *Wuthering Heights* is a marvellous curiosity in letters. We challenge the world to produce another work in which the whole atmosphere seems so surcharged

with suppressed electricity, and bound in with the blackness of tempest and desolation. From the time when young Heathcliff is introduced to us, "as dark almost as if he came from the devil," to the last page of the story, there is nothing but savagery and ferocity, except when we are taken away from the persons to the scenes of the narratives, and treated to those pictures in which the author excels. The Heights itself, the old north-country manor-house, is made intensely real to us, but not more so than the central figure of the story, who, believing himself alone one night, throws open the lattice, and cries with terrible anguish—"Cathy! oh, my heart's darling. Hear me this once. Catherine, at last!" Then his history is recapitulated, by one who witnessed his life in all its stages; and in the passage where Catherine informs her nurse that she has promised to marry Edgar Linton, but ought not to have done so, we get the following example of concentrated force:—

"I have no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in Heaven. But it would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him, and that not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as moonbeams from lightning, or frost from fire. . . . Who is to separate us? they'll meet the fate of Milo. I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be, an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger; I should not seem a part of it. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind; not as a pleasure any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being."

Then comes Catherine's death—when she asks forgiveness for having wronged him, and Heathcliff answers, "Kiss me again; and don't let me see your eyes! I forgive what you have done to me. I love my murderer—but *yours*! How can I?" The tale of woe proceeds; the despairing man longing for the dead, until at last he faces death, and being asked if he will have the minister, replies—"I tell you I have nearly attained my Heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued and uncoveted by me." He then sleeps beside her: the tragedy of eighteen years is complete. A great deal has been said on the question whether such a book as *Wuthering Heights* ought to be written, and Charlotte Brontë herself felt impelled to utter some words of defence for it. Where the mind is healthy it can do no harm; but there are possibly organisations upon whom it might exercise a baleful influence. With regard to the drawing of Heathcliff, Currer Bell scarcely thought the creation of such beings justifiable, but she goes on to say that "the writer who possesses the creative gift owns something of which he is not always master—something that, at times, strangely wills

and works for itself." We are afraid that if this opinion were pushed to its logical issues it would be found incapable of being supported. A multiplication of such books as *Wuthering Heights* without corresponding genius would be a lamentable thing, no doubt; yet, while we cannot defend it altogether possibly as it stands, we should regret never having seen it, as one of the most extraordinary and powerful productions in the whole range of English literature.

Anne Brontë, the youngest of the three sisters, was unlike Charlotte and Emily in disposition and mental constitution. She was not so vigorous, and seemed more dependent upon the sympathy of others. These characteristics are apparent in her works, though in her principal novel there are touches which almost remind one of Emily. She was, nevertheless, deficient in the energy which distinguished her sisters, and was altogether frailer in body, and more tender and serene in spirit. The devotional element in her nature was very strong, as will be seen from a perusal of her poems. Her sensitiveness was great, and apt to be wounded by the bitter experiences she was called upon to endure as one of the class of ill-treated individuals called governesses. Some of these experiences she has commemorated in her story *Agnes Grey*, which, however, shows no notable powers of penetration and insight such as the world had been accustomed to look for in the authors bearing the cognomen of Bell. It is the most inferior of all the works written by the sisters, though interesting in many aspects. Possessed of a less determined will than Emily, Anne Brontë bore her sufferings patiently, and as the hour of dissolution approached, the terrors which had bound her spirit were dissipated, and she passed away, we are assured, in a calm and triumphant manner. Her last verses are most beautiful in sentiment, and worked out with considerable skill. It is a curious question how this gentle woman, nevertheless, came to write such a narrative as *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, which in some of its details is more offensive and repulsive than the great *pièce de resistance* of her next elder sister. The drunken orgies of Mr. Huntingdon and his companions cannot fail to be disgusting to the reader, vivid though the relation may be in colour. Most probably that portion of the story was suggested by the sad practical acquaintance the author had been compelled to make of the effects of the vice of drunkenness in her brother Branwell. The sorrow entailed by his conduct weighed upon her deeply, and she gave relief to her feelings by picturing the sin with all its hideous consequences and deformity through the medium of fiction. It might be that she had hope such a revelation would be effective for good, and certainly all who read the story cannot but be affected by that wretched portion of it devoted to the delineation of a drunkard. It is the strongest, the most striking part of the volume, and the mystery of its production by such a pure soul as Anne Brontë's can only be explained on the hypothesis we have assumed. The love of Gilbert Markham for the attractive and clever widow is a delightful episode, and excellently told, and the closing chapters go very far to redeem the unpleasantness

we were compelled to encounter in the body of the work. As with Emily, Anne Brontë's strong point as a novelist was in the delineation of one grand master passion from the moment when it entered into the soul to the time when it assumed complete and undisputed possession of it. We see this tyranny of passion in Heathcliff; we behold the tyranny again in another direction in Mr. Huntingdon. In both cases, however, it is finally left with as repulsive an appearance as the graphic pencils of the artists were able to command. No one can affirm that vice is ever winked at: it is, on the contrary, drawn without cloak or veil, in order that its devotees may be ashamed, or that those who are in danger of becoming its victims may be arrested and appalled. Such, we take it, is the great lesson of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, and readers, even without sympathy for the author, would be unjust to affirm that the lesson is not taught with sufficient distinctiveness and force. There are some things which only need to be described to be abhorred; and this feeling probably led to the production of the work just alluded to.

Of the little volume of poetry written conjointly by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, and published before their prose works, there is not much to be said, except that it might teach a lesson to some of the poets of the present day, that the best inspiration after all is to be derived from contact with Nature herself. Many of these verses are not only Wordsworthian in their simplicity of expression, but also in their reverent feeling for the Great Teacher of all true poets. They are rills which spring from the best source of inspiration, and, whilst they do not lose the idiosyncracies of their respective authors, are all imbued with intense love of outward beauty, and breathe of the native heath upon which they were in most part written. The poems which bear traces of the highest flight of imagination are undoubtedly those of Ellis Bell. Her genius here attains a more refined expression, without losing anything of its power. In several instances she has surrounded an old subject with new and delightful interest, and even where her choice has fallen upon more sombre subjects, the originality is so great that we are lost in admiration, and enter fully into the theme, glad of the new thoughts even when the old theme, *per se*, has no charms for us. Amongst the many fine things which have been said of Memory, where are there four lines which concentrate so much regret as are found embedded in this utterance?—

I dare not let it languish,
Dare not indulge in memory's rapturous pain;
Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could I taste the empty world again?

This was no maundering of a simply sentimental spirit, but the outcome of a soul that had suffered, and had not lost its strength, though a deep sorrow encompassed it, and obscured its vision. There was not the light that shone in the old days, and the regret that has overtaken many a heart formed a truthful and fine utterance in one who was gifted with a power of expression beyond her fellows. But the last lines which this

wonderfully-gifted woman ever wrote strike us as being specially noteworthy. They are an address to the Deity: space fails us to quote them all, but as a specimen of their strength we may give the following:—

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts; unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest paths amid the boundless main.

To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity.

Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And Thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee.

There is not room for death,
Nor atom that His might could render void;
Thou, Thou art Being and Breath,
And what Thou art may never be destroyed.

We will not stay to investigate the theology of this passage, but as a specimen of poetic vigour it is well worthy of reprinting. The poems of Charlotte Brontë strike us as being the least excellent in the collection. Correct as they are in sentiment and expression, they lack the emphasis to be perceived in those of her sisters. The probability is that while Emily and Anne Brontë would have attained considerable eminence as poets, Charlotte would have wasted her powers on a branch of literature to which she was not quite adapted. In the case of Emily, the brief, decisive, epigrammatic form of expression suited her genius, just as the devotional cadence suited that of Anne, but Charlotte had better scope in a more didactic and extended style. One spirit breathes through the poems of Acton Bell—that which animates the trembling suppliant appealing to Heaven. They are all a single cry couched in different, but exquisite language, the cry of a dependant for guidance by a Sovereign hand. The moods may differ, but the substance of the soul's aspiration is the same, and there are few sweeter religious poems than that which contains the last thoughts and wishes of Acton Bell. The verses are so well known that we refrain from reproducing them; but they may be taken as a good illustration of the spirit which animated the author, and form a touching farewell to a world in which she could never be said to have been at home.

With regard to the position which the Brontës occupy amongst authors, we express ourselves with some diffidence. In summing up their general merits, and pronouncing upon their works, it must be done as a whole, and with no singling out of particular excellences. So, whilst Charlotte Brontë infinitely eclipses novelists of the highest reputation in isolated qualities—such as those we have already endeavoured to point out—it must be confessed that when we speak of her as the artist it cannot be as pertaining to the very highest rank. Her genius is intense, but not broad, and it is breadth

alone which distinguishes the loftiest minds. But if she fails to attain the standard of the few writers who have been uplifted by common consent to the highest pinnacle of fame, she is the equal of any authors of the second rank. It is not too much to predict, in fact, that many meretricious works which have been commended for public admiration will lose in popularity, while those of which we have been speaking will increase. It is impossible for two of the works of Charlotte Brontë to fall out of our literature. They have been stamped as genuine gold and will keep continually in circulation. Works which fail to pass this ordeal are those which are either weak or false; these are both strong and true. We obtain from the author of *Jane Eyre* no multitude of characters, but those we do get we become closely familiar with—and one being of veritable flesh and blood is worth a thousand insubstantial imitations. The novels deal with no particular forms of religious belief, or social questions, which the author would doubtless but have regarded as accidents of which she cared to take no account; and hence we may affirm that after the lapse of fifty years her works would read as freshly as when they first made their appearance. It was humanity she strove to produce; not its creeds, crotchets, or peculiarities; and it is for this reason that the labour will triumphantly stand the test of time. The inner life of a soul is very much the same in all ages. Its hopes, its fears, and its joys do not change with the changing seasons and the revolving years. Ages pass away, and those writers and writings which have only appealed to transient phases of thought or particular changes of society are swept away as by a resistless current, whilst those who defy the potency of the waves are the gifted few who have shown the genuine power of interpreting nature, or of dealing with the passions of the human heart.

Rocket and Mortar Apparatus for saving Life from Shipwreck, and Volunteer Life Brigades.

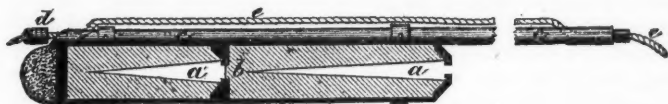
WRECKS often occur in positions inaccessible to a lifeboat, as on a rocky beach, or at a great distance from lifeboat stations; and it has been found necessary to institute a supplementary service for such emergencies. The rocket and mortar apparatus, with the improvements and developments which it has received within late years, both in the mechanism and in the manner of working it, is generally had recourse to in such cases, and has frequently done good service where a lifeboat would have been useless, or could not be had. As the subject is very little known, we shall endeavour to give a description of the apparatus, divested as far as possible of technicalities, and of the manner of working it, and some account of the organisation of the Volunteer Life Brigades and Companies which have contributed so much to its more extended and effective use, and of the kind of work which they are called on to perform.

For this means of saving life from shipwrecks the country is mainly indebted to the humane exertions of the late Captain Manby, who, when stationed at Yarmouth in the early part of this century, devoted much time and labour to the invention and perfecting of the apparatus which, with some improvements in details, is, as now used, substantially the same as he left it. The most important change is the substitution of Boxer's rocket for the mortar and shell used by Manby, which were liable to many objections. Dennet's "twin" rockets, also formerly in use, have been withdrawn since 1865. They were very uncertain in their flight, sometimes failed to ignite, frequently broke the lines, and were, besides, double the cost of Boxer's rocket. We shall, therefore, confine our attention to the Boxer rocket, and shall begin our description of the apparatus with it, taking the rest in the same order as they come into use at a wreck, and thus combine the description and working of the several parts. It may be stated in the outset that the important stations are provided with a well-appointed cart suitable for conveying the entire apparatus, with which it is kept equipped and ready when any occasion for its use is likely to arise. The cart is fitted with drag-ropes, by which it may be dragged by men, horses being employed for long distances. Upon a wreck occurring the cart is at once hurried to the nearest accessible point, and the work of rescuing the crew is begun.

All rockets from which a considerable velocity is required must have a hollow cone in the centre of the head large enough to expose a

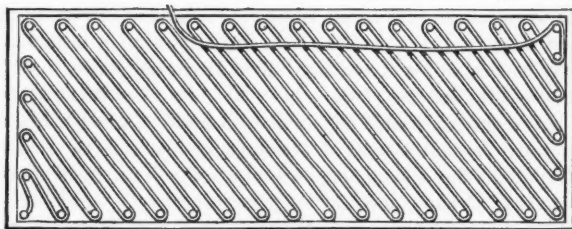
sufficient surface of the inflammable composition to generate the quantity of gas necessary to give the desired propulsion. The peculiarity of the Boxer Life-saving Rocket is that this cone is not continuous throughout the head, which consists, in fact, of two rocket bodies placed one in prolongation of the other. The cavities *a*, *a'* (Fig. 1) are separated by a solid portion of composition (*b*), and when this is burnt through,

Fig. 1.



the effect of the front cavity is brought into action, and imparts a fresh impulse to the rocket. The object of this arrangement is to obtain an even velocity throughout the flight, to give greater length of burning and flight without any sudden violence or developing too high a velocity at any point, which might break the line attached to the rocket. The length of the 12-pr. rocket is 24 inches, and securely fixed to one side of it is the *rocket stick* (*c*), $9\frac{1}{2}$ ft. long, and of uniform thickness throughout. The front of the stick, at the part where the flame issues from the rocket, is protected by a sheet of tinned iron, tacked over it for a length of 14 inches. Each end of the stick is hollowed, as shown in Fig. 1, to receive the *rocket line*, which is passed through, and lies along the back of the stick, two fathoms of it having been thoroughly wetted, to prevent as far as possible the chance of its getting burnt. The end

Fig. 2.



of the line is secured by a common overhand knot; one brass washer and two of india-rubber (*d*) are placed between the knot and the stick, to reduce the effect of the sudden jerk which is given to the line when the rocket is fired. A second knot is made in the line near the hinder end of the stick, so that if the line should be burnt near the rocket the knot may catch the stick and maintain the connection. The *rocket line*

is a thin rope, as light as is compatible with the necessary strength, and of sufficient length to allow of the greatest possible flight of the rocket and still leave one end with the party on shore. The line is *faked* on *faking* pins in a box, as shown in Fig. 2, the object being to have it arranged so that it may run off smoothly, and without any obstruction or ravelling, which would most likely cause it to snap, or in some way fail of effecting the desired communication. If the line has been brought to the scene of a wreck loose, or if it is necessary to use a line a second time, it must be faked on the ground with equal care. Before firing the rocket, the faking pins are lifted out of the box, which is tilted a little towards the wreck to facilitate the free run of the line. We shall suppose that the line has been attached to the rocket, and properly disposed by the persons told off for that duty, and we now come to the most important part of the whole operation, the laying and firing of the rocket, on which the success of all efforts to effect a communication with a wreck in the first place depends. The *rocket stand*, or *frame* for firing the rocket from, consists of a rectangular trough, large enough to receive the head of the rocket, and, in prolongation of it, a narrower and shallower trough to receive the stick; both are made of sheet iron, and the latter is strengthened by an iron rod underneath, and forms one of the legs of the tripod supporting the stand. From the head of this the other two legs open latterly. On the right side of the rocket bed is fixed a brass quadrant plate, with plummet and line to indicate elevation. On the left side protected by a cover is a strong lock of simple construction, with a lever-trigger to explode by percussion a tube containing a detonating mixture, which communicates through an aperture in the side of the trough with the vent of the rocket. A line from the trigger is led down the left leg of the stand, passing through one sheave at the socket, and another near the foot. Or the rocket may be fired by means of a port-fire through an opening on the right side; but for this the rocket requires to be primed with a fuse which takes about five seconds to burn. It is best when possible to use the lock, as by means of it instant advantage may be taken of a favourable lull in the wind, which is of great importance at the starting of the rocket, when its speed is slowest. The rocket having been placed in the frame with the vent uncapped, and the line properly disposed abreast of the frame and a little to the leeward of it to prevent the line coming in contact with it in running out, the frame is then laid and pointed at the proper elevation. Great care must be taken that the frame is perfectly level, as if it is down at one side the flight of the rocket will be inclined in that direction. This is the most frequent cause of bad shots when they occur. If firing across the wind, sufficient allowance must be made, so that the rocket and line may not be carried to leeward of the wreck. If they pass to windward, the line is very likely to be carried on board by the wind or sea; the object is to send the rocket if possible through the rigging, if standing, or close over the wreck, and this is most likely to be effected by the lowest

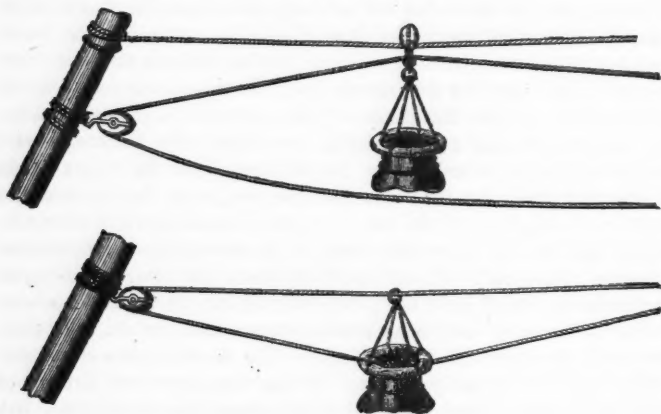
elevation that will carry the required distance; and, besides, with a low elevation the distance is more quickly traversed, and as there is less line out it is less liable to be deflected by the wind— 35° to 38° of elevation gives the maximum range, which averages about 370 yards.

The rocket is not a missile calculated for accurate flight, particularly across a strong wind. The centre of gravity is in the head and is not coincident with the centre of figure, and the mechanical action of the wind on the stick, constantly tends to turn the head up the wind, and as the propulsive power is continuous, and acts in whatever new direction is given to the rocket, this tendency would ultimately point the rocket straight into the wind. This serious cause of deflection is fortunately counteracted in the case of the Life-saving Rocket by the effect of the line, the pull of which from the starting-point, in spite of the bend caused in the centre by the wind, is sufficient to keep the axis of the rocket parallel to the original line of flight, and this steadying effect increases with the length of flight. Hence the rocket will not be pointed up the wind, but rocket and line together will be carried down the wind a certain distance, which may be allowed for. Great care is always taken with the first shot, both because it is in all cases desirable to effect a communication as quickly as possible, and because the chance of doing so is much greater when the line is dry, light, and carefully faked, than after it has become wet and dirty from being previously used. The man who pulls the trigger stands to windward and passes the trigger line under his foot so that the direction of the pull may be down the leg of the stand and not tend to disturb it. Should the line not fall within reach of the shipwrecked crew, another rocket is immediately laid and fired, the line of the former one being in the meantime hauled in for use if required. If happily the line has been seized by the crew, they make certain preconcerted signals, with flags during the day, and with lights at night—that is, if they are acquainted with them, which is rarely the case. It has been found that five out of every six crews who have had to depend on the rocket apparatus for their last chance of life, have been ignorant of the method of using it, and lamentable mistakes have, in consequence, sometimes been made. It would be highly desirable that every ship should be compelled to exhibit in some conspicuous place short printed directions for the use of the apparatus, or even to carry a small model of it, which might be explained to the crew.

Suppose the signal made, we are now brought to the next part of the apparatus—a “*whip*” of manilla line of about one-and-a-half inch *rove* through a single “*tailed block*.” The *tailed block* is an ordinary block and pulley with a *tail* or free end of rope attached to it about two fathoms in length, by which it may be made fast to the mast or some other part of the wreck. A *whip* is the name given to a rope *rove* or led over the pulley or wheel of such a block, and in this case the two ends are spliced so as to form an endless rope. The inshore end of the rocket line is now bent or fastened round both parts of the *whip* about two fathoms from the *tailed block*, and the signal to haul off is given to the crew by a man told off

for that duty. While the crew are hauling off the *whip*, which is the heaviest, almost the only part of the work which falls to them, those on shore are careful to pay out the lines clear of kinks, and no faster than they can take them in, to avoid as much as possible all risk of their fouling each other, or rocks, wreckage, or any obstructions in the way. When the crew have got the *tailed block* on board they find attached to it a *tally board* with these directions in English on one side, and French on the other. "*Make the tail of the block fast to the lower mast well up. If masts are gone, then to the best place you can find. Cast off rocket line, see that the rope in the block runs free, and show signal to the shore.*" After this, all the work is done by the party on shore, who have now a communication with the wreck by means of an endless rope running over a pulley attached to the ship, by which they may send anything off or bring

Figs. 3 and 4.



anything ashore. The signal having been received, the *hawser*, a three-inch manilla rope, is attached about two or three fathoms from its end to one return of the whip, and is sent off to the wreck by hauling on the other. Along with the hawser the crew receive another tally board directing them to "*Make this hawser fast about two feet above the tail block. See all clear and that the rope in the block runs free, and show signal to the shore.*" Great care is necessary to prevent the hawser and whip line from twisting round each other, and with this view they are laid in contrary directions, the hawser being a right-handed, and the whip a left-handed rope; it is also necessary to keep both returns of the whip well in hand and well apart.

The hawser having been signalled fast, it is now time to send off the *breeches buoy*. This is a *sling life-buoy* with *petticoat breeches*, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4, to secure persons insensible or helpless from falling out

of it, or being washed out when it is necessary to drag them through the surf. Attached to the sling is a *traveller* or inverted block with a brass sheave or wheel through which the end of the hawser has been led before being sent off. One return of the whip is made fast to the traveller, and by hauling on the other return the breeches buoy is sent off to the wreck, and at the same time the hawser is being *set up*, that is hauled taut. Where the nature of the shore requires, and other conditions admit, a *triangle* composed of three hollow iron cylinders is erected, from which is suspended a *swivel snatch block*, that is a block opening at one side so as to admit of the hawser being at once let in without the delay of threading it through from the end. By this time the men told off for that duty will have buried an *anchor* with one fluke in the earth, sand, or shingle, or if the shore is too soft for an anchor to hold, a stout plank five or six feet in length with a fathom of chain of sufficient strength fastened round it amidships, is buried three or four feet underground, the end of the chain with a ring attached being brought to the surface. To this or to the anchor the hawser may be set up by means of a *double block tackle purchase*, a double system of pulleys. The object in making taut the hawser and elevating it by the triangle is, if possible, to keep the persons coming ashore clear of the waves, wreckage, and rocks. As soon as the breeches buoy reaches the wreck the crew, even two or three at a time, may get into it and are brought ashore by their rescuers hauling on the return of the whip attached to the buoy. The buoy is again sent off and the process repeated until all are landed, a consummation always greeted with hearty cheers. Great care is necessary in sending off the breeches buoy empty, as in a strong wind it is sometimes blown right round over the top of the hawser, of course fouling the whip with it: the best way to prevent such a mishap is to run it out as rapidly as possible and allow no slack line out. When the work is completed it is desirable to bring in the hawser to prevent its getting chafed or otherwise damaged, and that it may be ready for use if again required. This is effected by means of a *cutter* so constructed that it can be run out smoothly on the hawser to the wreck, when a smart pull landwards brings two knife-blades into action which sever the hawser.

This is the full working of the apparatus, which is always carried out when circumstances admit, but various modifications are frequently necessary. If the motion of the wreck is very violent, the hawser is not set up, as with the tackle used it would not be possible to follow readily enough the oscillations of the wreck, and the hawser would certainly be snapped. In such a case the hawser is manned by a sufficient number of hands, who by hauling and letting go humour the swinging of the wreck, and still keep the hawser sufficiently taut. Again on a very flat, soft beach, when the triangle could not be erected, nothing would be gained by using the hawser, and sometimes the immediate break-up of a wreck is so imminent that not a moment is to be lost. In these cases the *traveller* is removed from the sling of the breeches buoy and one end of the whip is

led through the *thimble* or ring attached to the slings, and the ends are then made fast to the opposite sides of the buoy (Fig. 4), which thus both travels on the whip and is hauled by it. Sometimes the proceedings are more summary than any described. When a wreck is near precipitous rocks, or a pier, the communication is effected by throwing a hand-line to which is attached a *heaving-stick*, a loaded stick to carry the line farther; the whip or hawser is sent off as may be judged best, and the crew scramble ashore, often not a moment too soon to escape from the jaws of death.

In all cases when the apparatus is used, two men are equipped in life-belts with life-lines attached, whose duty it is to go into the surf to rescue any that may have been washed overboard from the wreck.

The apparatus is under the charge of the Coast-guard or Customs at the different stations, and the chief officer present has the power to compel owners of horses to lend them for use in cases of shipwreck, and to order all persons present to assist in any way he may require. But even from the difficulties that have been pointed out as occurring in the use of the apparatus, it may be inferred that unskilled assistance is of little service under the circumstances usually attending a wreck, especially at night. This would be still more apparent from a glance at the very minute and precise drill, very much resembling gun drill, each man having his special duty assigned him, which it is considered necessary to practise in order to secure the working of the apparatus with rapidity and success. The coast-guard are seldom present in sufficient numbers to act by themselves, and sometimes wrecks occur simultaneously, to more than one of which it would be impossible for them to attend. The need of skilled and organised assistance was never more painfully apparent than at the wreck at the mouth of the Tyne of the *Stanley*, passenger steamship between Aberdeen and Newcastle, in November, 1864, by which twenty-six persons perished after many hours of terrible agony. The fearful scenes of that night determined some gentlemen who had been helpless witnesses of them to take care that there, at least, for the future trained and efficient help should never be wanting. The result of the movement then started was the Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade, which has served as the pattern for nearly 150 brigades and companies at different places along our coasts, and is still regarded as the chief, as well as parent of all existing brigades. All new apparatus or improvements are sent to it for trial and report, and all representatives of foreign Governments desirous of becoming acquainted with the working of the apparatus are referred to it.

As the craft of all descriptions annually entering the Tyne far exceed in number, although not in tonnage, those entering any other port in the kingdom, and it is the only port on the north-east coast to which ships can run under stress of weather, although yet but imperfectly fitted to serve as a harbour of refuge, there will always be need for a strong and well-drilled brigade at Tynemouth. The massive piers on each side of

the river, which have been building since 1853, and are still far from complete, and the dredging operations of the River Commissioners, have greatly improved the entrance to the harbour, as well as the whole course of the river under their jurisdiction. Just before the commencement of the piers men have been known to wade across the river at the bar where there is now never less than twenty feet of water. The piers converge, but are still about three-quarters of a mile apart, and with such a depth of water the waves, particularly with an east or south-east wind, roll in in unbroken volume and force, and the greatest danger now lies inside the bar or what used to be the bar. A ship, once fairly within the piers and standing up the river, has on the north side the Battery Rocks lying around the foot of a lofty promontory overlooking the mouth of the river on which stands the old Spanish Battery, and then, continuous with these, but trending up the river, those "*infames scopulos*" the "*Black Middens*," the scene of ever recurring wrecks, whose low-lying undefined ugliness is well described by the name they bear; and then farther up and more advanced into the channel, and somewhat more elevated, the Prior's Rock, bearing a beacon, which once passed, danger may be considered over. All those rocks are covered at high water up to the base of the cliffs overhanging them, and are bare at low, and in all intermediate states of the tide present a chaos of contending white and black—white breakers and naked black rocks—as ugly a sight as a poor mariner could have on his lee when, with the force of wind and waves, is combined, as is frequently the case, the insidious set of a strong ebb-tide intensified by a fresh in the river common during storms. On the south-side is the Herd Sand within the angle formed by the South Pier and the channel, which, though not so swiftly destructive to ships nor so fatal to life as the couchant rocks on the north, seldom surrenders a ship that has been once driven upon its shoals. Between these dangers, on the right hand and on the left, there is a deep and safe channel when it can be kept; but if a ship is at all disabled, if at the last moment her steering gear is broken or thrown out of order by one of the huge waves which still rise and break on the bar, her position is one of imminent peril. The intention is, when the piers have been carried to their full extent and the entrance has been sufficiently contracted, to widen and deepen the basin within by partially removing the rocks and by dredging, so that the waves entering may spread themselves and speedily die away, and then any ship, whatever her condition, having once got within the pier-heads, will at the worst be within reach of rescue by steam-tugs. The Tyne will then be a harbour of refuge much needed on that coast, to which all ships in distress may run, as indeed they do at present; but to effect all that may be accomplished with this view, much yet remains to be done entailing an expenditure which can hardly be met from local resources, but to which no public contribution has yet been made. The River Commissioners have already expended upwards of 2,000,000*l.* of borrowed money in addition to their annual expenditure from revenue on the piers and river improvement, and

without State aid it is to be feared that they will be compelled to carry their pier works no farther than the trade requirements of the port demand, leaving the harbour to some extent a snare rather than a refuge to vessels that can no longer withstand the fury of the storm in the open sea.

The Tynemouth Volunteer Life Brigade consists of nearly 150 members, who are formed into four divisions, each under the command of a captain, elected annually by the efficient members. The constitution and management of the Brigade will be best understood from the following copy of the rules which have been adopted by the Board of Trade for the regulation of all brigades and companies enrolled for the same purpose.

The Brigade is composed of all classes of society resident in the neighbourhood, and includes clergymen, doctors, men of business, and those in their employ, and a good proportion of boatmen, fishermen, and men who have formerly been sailors. The dress worn at drill is a dark blue guernsey with a wide light-coloured waist-belt, having the initials of the Brigade embroidered on it. The belt is always worn at wrecks, and is necessary, particularly at night, to distinguish members from other persons present, who are sometimes apt to force themselves where they can only be in the way. There is a regular practice drill once a month, but often more frequently when it is desired to test some proposed improvement in the apparatus, or to exhibit its use to the representatives of foreign States, and others who may wish to adopt it. From the interest shewn in the subject, both by America and several European Governments, we may hope that our sailors will soon find the same means provided for their rescue from danger on foreign shores as are now so common along our own coasts. The usual place of practice is from the north side of the promontory already referred to, which is separated by a small bay, called Prior's Haven, from the North Pier and the loftier Castle Rocks, on which stand Tynemouth Castle and Fort, the Lighthouse, and the ruins of the ancient Priory. The distance from the firing point to the pier is about 150 yards, over which persons are taken to and fro as if from a wreck. The intervening space is occupied by the sea and rocks, either wholly or partially covered with water, and therefore presenting all the difficulties usually met with in cases of wreck. A proportion of these drills take place at night, and it is always considered fortunate when the weather proves stormy, that the conditions may as nearly as possible resemble those of real work. In order that a member may be reckoned effective, he must attend at least five drills in the year. The time from firing the rocket to landing the first man varies from six to twenty minutes; but as instruction is generally combined with the working of the apparatus, it is seldom that mere speed is aimed at. Their shortest performance in actual work when all the apparatus has been used was in the case of the wreck of the *Light of the Harem*, when a crew of five men were landed in twenty-four minutes, the four last being brought ashore in ten minutes, the delay with the first having arisen from their ignorance of the use of the apparatus.

The Watch House of the Brigade stands within an enclosure beside

the Spanish Battery, close to the edge of the cliff, overlooking the mouth of the river, and commanding a perfect view of the offing. Away to the south is seen a lofty wall of rock, starting at no great distance from the South Pier, in the Trow Rocks, and continued by the fantastically caverned and isolated rocks of Marsden to the Souther, the furthest point visible, and for miles beyond, with hardly a break on to the mouth of the Wear, against which the sea in stormy weather beats with ceaseless fury. The view of the coast line to the north, almost equally rocky and precipitous, is cut off by the Castle Rocks. The Watch House is a wooden structure about forty feet in length, divided into two apartments: the larger for general use, and the smaller to receive the rescued crews, where they are supplied with dry clothing, food, and restoratives, and receive every attention which their condition may require. The walls are hung round with rules, regulations, and notices, a few charts, and display some very suggestive trophies, the nameboards of vessels whose crews have been saved by the Brigade. Around two sides of the house runs a deep verandah, which on the river-side it was found necessary to close up, and fit with sliding windows and panels, as without some such protection it was most difficult, particularly at night, in such hurricanes of wind, rain and snow as often occur, to keep up a careful and constant out-look. At night especially, the watch must be incessant, as ships, or rather lights, for that is all that is seen or reported, start almost instantaneously from the darkness.

*Suave, mari magno turbantibus æquora ventis,
E terra magnum alterius spectare laborem—*

and the Tynemouth Brigade Watch House presents opportunities and facilities for this enjoyment such as Lucretius could hardly have contemplated, but the motive which brings the watchers there night after night, is very different from the temper which finds satisfaction in witnessing sufferings from which the sufferer is exempt—if such can ever be accepted as a true account of human feeling. People would not crowd to see their fellow-men hopelessly crushed and overwhelmed; the fascination of such scenes lies in the strife, the contest of skill and courage against brute force, and in the hope of victory; and the cheers which greet the landing of one man after another show that the spectators have not been thinking of their own security, but have been sharing in their hearts the feelings of the sufferers. From this position are witnessed scenes of terrible grandeur and power, and sometimes of wild and indescribable beauty, which, although they may be surpassed on many an unfrequented coast, are rarely to be seen associated with the human interest which possesses the spectator who sees, or knows not in what moment he may see, his fellow-men battling for life against force as irresistible as pitiless.

A storm, like all great realities, is grandest when best seen; it has nothing to gain from indistinctness of view. Night, if it increases the danger, conceals what the imagination can hardly reproduce and cannot

surpass. The low driving scud overhead is swept along ceaselessly in formless murkiness ; huge masses of foam, churned up in the recesses of the rocks, are torn up by the fierce blasts of the wind and whirled wildly through the air, smiting against the face of the cliffs and the green banks above, which are flecked with white as from the remains of a snow-storm. The black rocky coast line to the south, until it is lost in a sustained confusion of surging spray and cloud, seems dwarfed under the snow-white columns that are hurled up from its base, the summits of which, struck by the level wind above, stream far inland, a ragged curtain of spray, while the heavier masses thunder down again in a thousand cataracts. The nearer piers, with their lofty staging, are buried under the waves, which leap a hundred feet above them as in sudden surprise and wrath at their premature arrest. Out at sea, as far as the eye can penetrate, all is a scene of wild and tumultuous commotion, multitudinous as the waving tops of forest-trees, but incomparably more violent—no succession or common motion can be observed—wave leaps above wave against the lowering clouds, to fall back burst and baffled, until, nearing the shore, they seem to marshal themselves for the assault, and rushing on in swift succeeding lines, rear up their turbid might, bounding, quivering, coiling, until they precipitate themselves into the gulf which foreruns them, or are hurled unbroken against the rocks. Sometimes, towards the break of such a storm, the sun darts out for a moment, and all the countless features of the scene, before obscured in gloom and indistinctness, stand out sharp and clear as by a supernatural revelation ; or, at night, when the lower rack has been swept away, and the upper clouds have again piled themselves into masses, the full moon pours down between them through the storm-washed air a flood of stainless light, which transforms all the terror and grandeur into wild beauty and aerial grace. The rocks and piers are masked in shifting wreaths of snow-white cloud, the crash and roar of the breakers is carried off by the wind, and the waves, now all silver-white, appear to gambol and chase each other in harmless play, seemingly incapable of hurt to ship or life ; and on the extreme verge of the horizon, beyond the nearer light and farther darkness bounding it, there is a streak of purest, calmest brightness, which seems to speak of a region beyond all of perfect light and peace. But it is very rarely that a smiling heaven thus transfigures the wrathful face of the deep, and most commonly a storm dies out in the sullen gloom which has been one of the most striking and oppressive features of its previous course.

In such weather the Brigade keep watch in sufficient force day and night in the Watch House, and members who may spend part of the night in their own houses in the village are constantly on the alert for the signals. When the watch has to be maintained over a week or ten days, as is sometimes the case, the duty, large as the Brigade is, becomes severe, and sometimes for such a period the more responsible members, and those who also form the lifeboat crews, which are not so numerous, never

sleep out of their clothes. There are two lifeboats on the station, one in Prior's Haven, and the other in the river; but from the rocky nature of the shore it is seldom they could be used on the north side, and more seldom they could be launched. The lifeboats of North and South Shields, the latter of which claims the invention and first use of the lifeboat, are generally more available, and being kept constantly afloat in the harbour in stormy weather, are readily towed by tugs wherever their services can be of any use. At night, the time of greatest danger, the muster is always good, as many members, otherwise engaged during the day, are then able to attend. If many ships are entering the river, they are kept on the alert the whole night, but sometimes, when a storm has lasted two or three days, several hours may pass without a single ship appearing. On such occasions the earlier part of the night is spent in chatting, playing draughts and dominoes, listening to tales of wrecks by those who have suffered or witnessed them, or to "narrative age," recalling the time when as many as forty wrecks have been seen on the rocks together—for in the course of time every rock about these shores, and every foot of sand, have charged themselves as heavily with the tragedy of unrecorded human suffering as the sods of any battlefield the most renowned.

About eleven o'clock there is a great making of coffee, which is served out with bread and cheese, and again between three and four; and no stronger stimulant is ever allowed except in cases of great exhaustion. After midnight the games have all been discontinued, the talk has gradually failed, the untended lamps throw gloomy shadows on the unceiled roof, and project pillars of blackness against the walls, men slip quietly away and extend themselves on the benches which run round the sides of the room, or let their heads droop on their folded arms on the tables. The wakeful seek what pastime or entertainment they can find in the stores of a small but exceedingly miscellaneous library, the gift of friends, and inside all is stillness, amidst the roar of the waves and the raving of the wind outside. If the watch report a "light off the bar," all is instant commotion, coats are hastily buttoned up, sou'westers firmly secured, and all turn out to watch one more duel between man and his handiwork on one side, and all the powers of storm, darkness, and mischance on the other. At first nothing is to be seen but a light, plunging, staggering, and reeling in the darkness, now visible, now suddenly quenched, now seeming to overhang the shore, and then sinking into the far distance, and always, except to experienced eyes, appearing to be in a fatally wrong course. Soon, unless the night is very dark, the dusky outline of the ship becomes visible against the white water which borders on both sides that streak of grey within which she strives to keep, and if she weathers these last dangers, she is watched on her way up among the harbour lights with not a little of that feeling of relief and thankfulness which all know must fill her crew at the sudden change from extreme peril to absolute security. But if the run for the harbour is not to have this happy issue and it becomes evident that the ship must strike on one

side or the other, the signal-guns are fired, two for the north and three for the south side, followed by a sky-rocket. The reports strike sharp and sudden against the village; the rolling echoes, which at other times prolong themselves among the rocks, are swept away by the swift wind, and only the hard, startling, urgent shock is heard; along the streets there is a sudden banging of doors and the sound of hurried feet on the pavements, but before these can reach the station, the cart, always ready with a full equipment of the apparatus, is on its way to the wreck, the gear is carried where the cart cannot go, and the work of rescue proceeds with as much promptitude and regularity as an ordinary drill.

Much has been said about the uncertainty of the flight of the rocket, but the Tynemouth Brigade have never failed to get a line speedily on board, even up to a distance of 850 yards. When failure has occurred, it has been owing to the crew being unacquainted with the use of the apparatus. In the case of the wreck of the *Jabez*, two years ago, the only man who reached the line lashed himself with it to the stump of the mast, and could not be made to understand that he ought to haul it in, and in consequence he and three others perished close to shore, only two who were washed overboard being saved. The two Brigades at the mouth of the Tyne, for there is a similar one—the South Shields Brigade—on the south side, have together saved about 100 lives during the eight years they have been in existence.

The dangers and hardships to which men expose themselves in working the rocket apparatus are not equal to those incurred by the crews of lifeboats, but still they are far from inconsiderable, and in some cases have proved fatal. Mr. Byrne, late chief officer of the Coast Guard on the Tynemouth station, never recovered from the effects of the long exposure on the dreadful night of the wreck of the *Stanley*, and the injuries he received in his gallant efforts to rescue her passengers and crew. More recently, Mr. Albert Drayton died from the effects of over-exertion and exposure in saving life at the wreck of the *Royal Adelaide*. But the experience of a single night of the Tynemouth Brigade will give an idea of the dangers which the volunteers are called on to face in the discharge of the duties which they have undertaken. The 17th of December last was remarkable for one of the severest S.E. gales which have visited this coast for some years. Many ships had made the harbour in safety during the day. No casualties had occurred, except that one barque had struck on the *Black Middens*, but got off again with disabled steering gear to become a total wreck on the Herd Sand, her crew being taken off by one of the Shields lifeboats. At night the wind continued with unabated fury, but had gone round almost to the east, and was thus more favourable for taking the harbour. About ten o'clock a light was seen off the head of the north pier in a most dangerous position. If she had come from the south, and overshot the fair-way, her fate was certain, she could not possibly haul off; if she had come over-sea, or from the north, which was hardly possible, and had way enough on her, she might still weather the

point. To avoid false alarms, the guns are never fired except when a wreck appears inevitable, but the Brigade, knowing from former experience that a wreck on the piers means sudden and complete destruction, had already, when the guns fired, got in motion along the rails on the low level of the pier a waggon containing a complete set of the apparatus kept there to meet such sudden emergencies. The ship proved to be the barque *Consul* of South Shields. She struck first on the rubble, and was then hurled broadside full against the staging of the pier, the outer tier of which she smashed down for many feet, undoing at one crash the painful work of favourable opportunities extending over many months. Huge piles, nearly three feet in diameter, were snapt like reeds, and next morning the little Haven was found choked with a wreckage of gigantic timbers, mingled with the punier fragments of the wreck, hurled up in a confusion that was half terrible and half grotesque. Finding that the wreck was alongside the pier, to save time the hawser and handline were taken out of the waggon and hurried along, the entire distance being about 600 yards. On reaching the wreck, the Brigade found that she had rebounded from the pier, and was lying on the rubble, about forty feet off, her mainmast and mizzenmast gone, which, with the after part of the hull, had been smashed by the fall of the pier timbers, killing instantaneously, as was afterwards learnt, the captain and four of the crew. The mate, who, with four others, escaped the fall of the rigging, made for the fore-topsail yard, which almost immediately fell overboard, carrying him with it. There were thus only four left alive after the first moment of collision, and of the wreck little more could be seen than the foredeck with foremast and bowsprit, which, from the total submersion of the after part of the wreck, stood tolerably high.

It was evidently a case for the promptest measures, and accordingly a handline was thrown on board, fortunately with success at the first attempt, and the survivors, after losing some time, as is frequently the case, in endeavouring to send a warp ashore, hauled off the line and got the hawser on board, which they quickly made fast, and three of them in rapid succession, with the sailor-like cleverness which had been reckoned on, came ashore hanging on to the hawser with hands and feet. The fourth, a young Dutchman, did not appear to have the same confidence in his own powers, for he stripped to shirt and drawers, and now hesitated to make the attempt. There was enough to cause the stoutest heart to pause, and few would have run the hazard but to escape certain death. The waves were running almost parallel to the pier and dividing on the head of it, and gathering up against it, tore through between it and the wreck like a furious roaring cataract, dashing not only a heavy spray high over the hawser, but hurling against it great surging masses of water, whose force the most desperate hold seemed but ill able to withstand. The loud crashing of the wreck, as some of the foremast rigging fell, at length determined him to start, and he had got about a third of the way when, on the clearing away of a heavy wave, he was seen

to have lost hold with his legs and to be hanging on by the arms only. As one wave after another passed he could be seen, for there was a full moon buried among the rack overhead, struggling hopelessly, and, indeed, aimlessly, for what appeared an incredibly long time, but was, perhaps, not more than two minutes altogether. Some members of the Brigade wished to go off to him, but wisely, as it proved, they were forbidden. It was determined to send off the breeches buoy, but as it is not allowed to use a snatch block for the *traveller*, although on such an emergency as this it might be useful, it had to be run on from the end of the hawser. This was done, and it only remained to attach a line to bring it back. One of the men was standing near the edge of the pier with his hand on the hawser in front of the buoy to prevent it running off before all was ready, when the Brigade was made aware that they themselves were within the wash of the sea. They had taken their position close to the head of the pier under the staging; many of the massive piles in front of them, broken at the base, but still attached to the scaffolding at the top, rocked and swung with every wave, making the whole structure, with its ponderous cranes and machinery overhead, groan and crack in a way that might have raised doubts, if there had been time for doubt, of its stability. Chains rattled and clanked, and the wind roared among the dark timbers, lashing over all torrents of hissing spray, when in one of those accesses of violence which seem to be periodical in storms, a heavy sea swept along the pier, knocking down most of the men on the hawser, which, bearing against the weather-side of one of the piles, fortunately enabled them to hold their ground; but the man in front of the breeches buoy was hurled into the sea, and many others narrowly escaped the same fate. With the same sea the foremast of the wreck went. The man overboard had on a cork jacket, and rose to the surface immediately; three life-buoys with lines were thrown to him, one of which he had seized, and had given the word to haul up, when he was dashed away by the next wave among the piles and unfinished masonry, no doubt to instant death, with a force to which all human power of resistance was piteously unequal. The man on the hawser still clung on; the breeches buoy, released from the hold of the poor fellow overboard, and struck by the same wave, had been shot out to him, but without a line attached. He had got hold of it, and had got into it, and had grasped a line thrown over him, and in a few seconds he too would have been safe on shore, when, as if collecting all its fury for a final assault, a tremendous sea came hurtling and roaring out of the darkness, tore away the entire remnant of the wreck, wrenched the hawser out of the men's hands, and almost dragged them over the brink. When the mass of water rolled past and the spray fell, not a vestige of the wreck was to be seen, and the *Consul*, which, after battling three days with the storm at sea, had but a quarter of an hour before been within a cable's length of safety, was now shattered to innumerable fragments. The Brigade immediately retreated from their dangerous position, and retiring half way along the pier, many of them

clambered down to the rocks, where, as it was now half ebb, they first began to show above water, and whenever a fragment of wreck appeared bearing any resemblance to a man, a dash was made into the surf. Some fancied they could hear cries, but it was vain to hope that any living thing could have passed the rocks between them and the wreck. The body of the Dutch sailor, whose desperate struggle was so fearfully terminated, was soon found, but life was gone beyond recall, and very soon the Brigade was withdrawn from useless risk, and, many of them wet to the neck, resumed their watch for the night. By this time the three rescued men were seated by the fire warmly clad and dry, all but their hair, which, still full of water, showed how recent their peril had been, exhibiting, as sailors always do under such circumstances, the most unassuming modesty and a touching humility, which seems to be divided between thankfulness and wonder that they can be the object of so much attention.

All this time no one could tell who the Brigade man was who had been swept off the pier. Men are so muffled up at this work that it is hard to recognise them in the dark, and the most painful suspense prevailed until two o'clock the next morning, when the fears of many were resolved, but to the certain sorrow of one bereaved family. The body was found on the Battery Rocks, and proved to be that of Robert Arkley, one of the most exemplary and respected members of the Brigade. Although Arkley's daily work was at the Northumberland Docks, three miles up the river, and he lived about a mile and a half from the Station, yet no one was more regular in his attendance. Often, when he had but just returned to his home after a long day's work, if the guns were fired he rushed off immediately, leaving his evening meal untasted. His wife had a strong and distressing presentiment that some evil would befall him in the Brigade service, and he always encountered from her the strongest opposition to his going out, particularly at night, and he has been known to make his escape by the window when she had secured the doors in the hope of keeping him in. And thus he continued, fearless himself and devoted to the duty he had undertaken, until his wife's worst fears were terribly verified.

The Planet Mars : an Essay by a Whewellite.

THE planet Mars has returned to our nocturnal skies, after being unfavourably placed for rather more than two years. He now shines throughout the night as a ruddy star in the constellation Virgo—distinguished by his superior lustre, as well as by his colour and the steadiness of his light, from the leading brilliants of that constellation. Night after night, he will rise earlier, becoming towards July and August an evening star in the ordinary sense of that expression—for, strictly speaking, he is already an evening star.

When Mars was last in a favourable position for observation, there appeared in the pages of this Magazine an essay, entitled *Life in Mars*, describing the considerations which have led astronomers to believe that in this planet conditions may prevail which would render life possible for such creatures as we are familiar with on earth. That essay dealt, in fact, with the arguments which would have been employed by Brewster in maintaining his position against a Whewell of the present day. We propose in the present essay to discuss certain considerations which point in a different direction, and would certainly not be left untouched by Whewell if he now lived, and sought to maintain his position against the believers in more worlds than one.

It is a little hard, perhaps, that an attack should be made against the habitability of Mars; for, though we are in the habit of speaking somewhat confidently of life in other worlds, it is, as a matter of fact, in Mars alone that astronomers have hitherto recognised any approach to those conditions which we regard as necessary for the requirements of living beings. All that is known about Mercury and Venus, tends to the conclusion that very few of the creatures existing on our earth could live in either planet—and assuredly man is not among those creatures. It is not merely that in both these planets the average daily supply of heat is far greater than we could endure unscathed, but that from the pose of these planets—the slope of their axes to the level of their path—the supply of heat varies greatly in amount, so that at one time there is much more than even that average supply which we could not bear, and at another no heat is received at all for many days in succession, or else a supply so small in quantity that beings like men would perish with the resulting cold. And when passing beyond Mars, and traversing the wonderful ring of small planets, we come to Jupiter, where, so far as direct solar heat is concerned, we are assured that there is not a tithe of the supply which would be necessary for beings like ourselves. For

the gap between Mars and Jupiter is quite unlike that which separates Mars from the earth, and the earth from Venus (referring of course to the paths of these bodies). From Mars to Jupiter is fully six times the distance from the earth to Mars, and the solar light and heat at Jupiter are reduced to less than the ninth part of the light and heat which are received by Mars. Of course Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune are still less fitted to be the abodes of creatures such as those which inhabit the earth.

Mars alone had given promise of habitability in the ordinary sense of the term. And the study of Mars had revealed many interesting results, apparently confirming in a striking manner the opinion that he is a "miniature of our earth"—a globe resembling the earth in physical habits, and like her the abode of living creatures, amongst which may be races resembling man. We know that Mars is not so very much farther than the earth from the sun, as at a first view to dispose of all idea that he is inhabited. His year is not so much longer than ours as to render our conceptions of his seasons incompatible with the existence of vegetable life resembling that which exists on the earth. Then we know that his seasons resemble those of the earth in their range: his arctic, temperate, and torrid zones occupy nearly the same relative portions of his globe as ours do. His day, again, only differs from the terrestrial day by about thirty-seven minutes. Water certainly exists on his surface, and the vapour of water is present in his atmosphere. Oceans and continents can be recognised on his globe—they have even been mapped and charted, and globes have been formed of the ruddy planet. The polar snow-caps of Mars can also be seen, and their increase and diminution with the varying seasons can be readily recognised. The signs of cloud and mist and rain, ocean-currents and air-currents, have also been traced. In fine, everything which one could hope to find as indicative of the habitability of so distant a world, has been seen in Mars; and accordingly it is not greatly to be wondered at if the theory that he is inhabited, and by beings not very unlike those existing on our earth, should have been comfortably accepted by most of those who have considered the subject.

Yet there has always been a serious difficulty in the way. Although the distance of Mars from the sun is not so much in excess of the earth's as to *compel* us to forego the idea that he is suitably warmed and lighted (reference being always made to the wants of such creatures as we are familiar with), yet there is a sufficient discrepancy to render it somewhat surprising that the meteorological conditions on Mars should apparently resemble those on the earth very closely. This would not be the place for nice calculations, and therefore we give results without entering into the details of the processes by which they have been obtained. It is the case, then, that the average daily supply of light and heat on Mars (square mile for square mile of his surface) is less than the supply on the earth in the proportion of two to five. When he is

at his nearest to the sun, the daily supply amounts to rather more than a half that received by the earth; but when he is at his farthest, the daily supply falls to little more than one-third of the earth's.

This is a very serious deficiency when rightly understood. We must not content ourselves by comparing it to the difference between the heat of a winter day and a summer day. We often have to endure for several days in succession a much greater degree of cold than would follow from the mere reduction of the sun's ordinary heat to one-third its present value, and the deficiency is not destructive to life. But it would be quite another matter if the whole supply of light and heat to the earth were reduced in this proportion. It must be remembered that to that supply we owe the continuance of all the forms of force, including vitality, on the whole earth. "The sun's rays," said Sir John Herschel in 1833,* "are the ultimate source of almost every motion which takes place on the surface of the earth. By its heat are produced all winds and those disturbances in the electric equilibrium of the atmosphere, which give rise to the phenomena of lightning, and probably, also, to terrestrial magnetism and the aurora. By their vivifying action vegetables are enabled to draw support from inorganic matter; and become in their turn the support of animals and man, and the source of those great deposits of dynamical efficiency which are laid up for human use in our coal strata. By them the waters of the sea are made to circulate in vapour through the air, and irrigate the land, producing springs and rivers."

What would happen if the source of all these processes, of every form, in fact, of force existing and acting on the earth, were to lose more than one-half of its power? We can answer this question best by another. What would happen if the engine working a mighty system of machinery were deprived of more than one-half its due supply of fuel? The engine might continue to work, but it would no longer work efficiently: the machinery would no longer serve its purpose. And in like manner, the great machinery, which is maintained by solar action on the earth, would no longer subserve its purpose—or if the vocabulary of teleology must be eschewed, this great machinery would no longer do what it is actually doing, it would no longer maintain active life upon the earth. If life still continued it would be sluggish, little more, in fact, than living death.

And if the failure of the solar supply at this present time would lead to such a result, how much more completely fatal to the existence of all such life as we now see upon the earth, would have been a defalcation of solar light and heat during the long-past ages when so many forms of force were stored up. To take one such form alone, and to consider it only as it affects the requirements of our own country—"the 'deposits of dynamical efficiency' laid up in our coal strata are simply," as Tyndall tells us, "the sun's rays in a potential form. We dig from our pits

* Before the notion had suggested itself to Stephenson, to whom it is commonly referred.

annually a hundred million tons of coal, the mechanical equivalent of which is of almost fabulous vastness. The combustion of a single pound of coal in one minute is equal to the work of three hundred horses for the same time. It would require one hundred and eight millions of horses working day and night with unimpaired strength for a year to perform an amount of work equivalent to the energy which the Sun of the Carboniferous Epoch invested in one year's produce of our coal-pits.

If Mars then not only receives day by day a much smaller supply of light and heat than our earth, but has been similarly circumstanced during all those past ages which supply the facts studied by geologists, what opinion must we form as to his present fitness to be the abode of creatures like those which exist upon our earth? It appears to us that there can be but one answer to this question. Our only doubt must depend on our acceptance of the opinion on which the question is based. If in any way the supply of heat has been increased, or—which amounts to the same thing—if a greater portion of the direct supply has been stored up, then, and then only can we regard Mars as a suitable abode for living creatures like those on the earth. For we may dismiss the supposition that the inherent heat of Mars's globe is such as to compensate for a deficiency in the supply of solar heat. So far is this from being at all probable, that on the contrary an additional difficulty is introduced by the consideration that in all reasonable likelihood Mars must have parted with a very much greater proportion of his inherent heat than our earth. His globe is very much smaller than that of the earth, and the total quantity of matter contained in it is little more than one-ninth of the matter contained in the earth's globe. Now, it is known that of two bodies equally heated, the smaller cools more rapidly than the larger. And certainly we have no reason to believe that at any epoch Mars was hotter than the earth at the same epoch. We should infer, indeed, that Mars was always much the less heated body. For according to the most generally received explanation of the original intense heat of the planets, such heat had its origin in the rush of matter drawn in by the attractive might of the aggregation which was, so to speak, the embryo of the planet. Thus the smaller planets, which must necessarily have had less attractive energy than the larger, would impart a less velocity to the intruding matter, and therefore would be less intensely heated. On all accounts it would follow that Mars is, at the present time, a much colder body than the earth.

Our sole resource, therefore, if we are to adopt the theory that the climate of Mars resembles that of the earth, is to assume that there is some peculiarity in his atmosphere by which it is enabled to retain a larger proportion of the heat received from the sun than happens in the case of our own atmosphere. If we are further to assume that the constitution of the atmosphere resembles that of our air—and no other assumption is compatible with the belief that creatures such as we are familiar with can exist in Mars—we must assume that the Martian atmosphere is much more

dense than our own. We need not enter here into the considerations on which this inference is based. Let it suffice to remark that there is a steady decrease of warmth with elevation in all parts of the earth, this decrease being unquestionably due to the greater tenuity of the air in high regions. And it is certain that if the density of the air were in any way increased, there would be a corresponding increase of warmth.

But when we apply this consideration to the case of Mars we find a difficulty in the disproportionate amount of atmosphere which must be assigned to this small planet. It seems a very natural and probable assumption that every planet would have an atmosphere proportional in quantity to the quantity of matter in the planet. Thus since the mass of Mars is but about one ninth of the earth's mass, we should infer that his atmosphere amounted in quantity to but one-ninth part of the earth's atmosphere. Of course we could not lay any stress on such an assumption; but it must be regarded as more probable, on *à priori* grounds, than any other. This would leave Mars with much less air over each square mile of his surface than there is over each square mile of the earth's surface: for the surface of Mars is much greater than a ninth part of the earth's; it is, in fact, between a third and a fourth of the earth's surface. But this is not all; not only (on the assumption we are dealing with) would there be much less air over each mile of the surface of Mars, but this smaller quantity of air would be much less strongly attracted towards the surface of the planet. For, owing to his small bulk and the comparative lightness of the materials of which he is constructed, Mars exerts less than two-fifths of the attractive force which our earth exerts. A mass which, on our earth, would weigh a pound, would on Mars weigh little more than six ounces; and the atmospheric pressure would be correspondingly reduced, even though Mars had as much air above each square mile of his surface as there is above each square mile of the earth's. This quantity of air would be twice as much as we should infer from the mass of Mars, and we should require five times as much air only to have an atmosphere as dense as our own at the sea level. An atmosphere about twice as dense as this would perhaps give a climate as mild, on the average, as that of our earth. But it seems rather a daring assumption to assign to Mars an atmosphere exceeding *ten* times in quantity what we should infer from the planet's mass.

It seems, on the whole, safer to abandon the theory that Mars is a suitable abode for such creatures as exist on the earth; and to try to explain observed appearances unhampered by a theory which after all is not in itself a probable one. For indeed we can employ in a very effective way against this theory a mode of argument which is commonly urged in its favour. It is reasoned that since the earth, the only planet we know, is inhabited, therefore probably the other planets are so. But we have seen that, so far as the evidence goes, all the other planets, save Mars alone, are probably not inhabited by beings such as those which exist upon the earth. Therefore, even on *à priori* grounds, it is more likely

that Mars is similarly circumstanced ; since there are six planets in favour of this inference, and only one, our earth, against it.

In resuming the inquiry, with the theory of Mars's habitability abandoned for the nonce, we must recall the facts which have been demonstrated respecting Mars, only we may now view them in a new light. We remember that he has polar snow-caps ; but we are no longer bound to regard these snow-covered regions as in any sense resembling our arctic regions. Again, the seas and oceans of Mars may be permanently frozen throughout the greater part of their depth. The water-vapour which is certainly present in his atmosphere may be raised only by the midday sun, to be precipitated in early evening. Winds and currents may equally well prevail in a rare as in a dense atmosphere. The white masses which have been compared to clouds, and whose dissipation has been held to imply the downfall of rain on Mars, may not be rain-clouds, but snow-clouds ; or where there is no downfall, they may be not cumulus-clouds, but cirrus-clouds,—that is, not such clouds as are raised in our dense air near the sea-level by the sun's warmth, but such light fleecy clouds as are suspended high above the loftiest mountain summits.

It appears to us, indeed, that if we make any change at all in our views about Mars, we must make a great change. If we suppose the Martian air moderately dense, comparable in density at any rate with our own air, then since we know that considerable quantities of aqueous vapour are raised into that air, we seem compelled to conclude that there would be a precipitation of snow (under the circumstances already considered) which should keep the surface of Mars as permanently snow-covered as our mountain-heights above the snow-line. As this is not the case, for Mars is not a white planet, we *must* assume so great a rarity of the Martial atmosphere that sufficient water-vapour can never be raised into that air to produce a permanent snow-envelope by precipitation. This view (on which we shall presently touch again) of course accords well with the *à priori* opinion respecting the Martian atmosphere referred to above. And therefore it seems to us manifestly the most probable and satisfactory course to assume that the Martian atmosphere bears about the same relation to ours in quantity which the mass of Mars bears to that of the earth. On this assumption it is easily shown that the atmospheric pressure on Mars corresponds to about four and a half inches of the mercurial barometer. We may take five inches as a fair probable estimate of the height of Martian barometric tubes, supposing there are any reasoning creatures on Mars who have made the same discovery as our terrestrial Torricelli.

At this stage it may be interesting to inquire whether the mere tenuity of the Martian air, on our assumption, would be a fatal objection to the theory that creatures like men can live on the planet. Could any man, for instance, exist for any length of time in an atmosphere corresponding in pressure to only four or five inches of the common barometer ? or could any race of men, after a gradual process of acclimatisation, become

enabled not merely to live in such an atmosphere but to thrive as a race, to undergo ordinary labours, to travel without being easily exhausted, and if need were, to defend themselves against their enemies or from sudden natural dangers?

The experiment has never yet been tried. Nor is it easy to see how it could be. Aëronauts have reached a height where the atmospheric pressure has been reduced to below seven inches of the common barometer; but in attaining this height they were exposed to other effects than those due to the mere tenuity of the atmosphere. We refer here to the celebrated ascent by Coxwell and Glaisher, on July 17, 1862, when the enormous elevation of 37,000 feet was attained, or nearly two miles above the summit of the loftiest mountain of the earth. But, although the circumstances of such an ascent do not altogether correspond to those depending solely on atmospheric rarity, it is probable that the most remarkable effects result from this cause, and therefore it will be well to consider what happened to the aëronauts in this journey. "Previous to the start," says Flammarion, in a work edited by Mr. Glaisher, "Glaisher's pulse stood at 76 beats a minute; Mr. Coxwell's at 74. At 17,000 feet, the pulse of the former was at 84; of the latter at 100. At 19,000 feet, Glaisher's hands and lips were quite blue, but not his face." At this height the atmospheric pressure was reduced to about one-half the pressure at the sea-level; in other words, the pressure corresponded to about fourteen and a half inches of the mercurial barometer. After passing beyond this height, distressing symptoms were experienced by both aëronauts. "At 21,000 feet, Glaisher heard his heart beating, and his breathing was becoming oppressed; at 29,000 feet, he became senseless, and only returned to himself when the balloon had come down again to the same level. At 37,000 feet, Coxwell could no longer use his hands, and was obliged to pull the string of the valve with his teeth. A few minutes later he would have swooned away, and probably lost his life. The temperature of the air was at this time twelve degrees below zero." This certainly does not suggest that life on the earth would be pleasant, if the air were reduced in quantity to that above the level reached by Coxwell and Glaisher on this occasion. But the barometer still stood nearly seven inches high when they began to descend, at which time Glaisher was nearly two miles above his fainting level, while Coxwell was all but powerless. And then it is to be remembered, as Flammarion well remarks, that in balloon ascents "the explorer remains motionless, expending little or none of his strength, and he can therefore reach a greater elevation before feeling the disturbance which brings to a halt at a far lower level the traveller who ascends by the sole strength of his muscles the steep sides of a mountain." What would be the state of a traveller having to exert himself in an atmosphere reduced to five-sevenths of the density of the air in which Coxwell was just able to save his own life and Glaisher's,—literally "by the skin of his teeth?"

To show the effect of active exertion in increasing the unpleasant

results of great atmospheric tenuity, we may quote the experience of De Saussure, in his ascent of Mont Blanc, noting however that recent Alpine travellers seem to have been more favoured, while the guides would appear to have become more inured to the hardships of high places than they were in 1787. We learn that "at 13,000 feet, upon the Petit-Plateau, where he passed the night, the hardy guides, to whom the previous marching was absolute child's play, had only removed five or six spadeful of snow in order to pitch the tent, when they were obliged to give in and take a rest, while several felt so indisposed that they were compelled to lie upon the snow to prevent themselves from fainting. The next day," says De Saussure, "in mounting the last ridge which leads to the summit, I was obliged to halt for breath at every fifteen or sixteen paces, generally remaining upright and leaning on my stock; but on more than one occasion I had to lie down, as I felt an absolute need of repose. If I attempted to surmount the feeling, my legs refused to perform their functions; I had an initiatory feeling of faintness, and was dazzled in a way quite independent of the action of the light, for the double crape over my face entirely sheltered the eyes. . . . The only thing which refreshed me and augmented my strength was the fresh wind from the north. When, in mounting, I had this in my face, and could swallow it down in gulps, I could take twenty-five or twenty-six paces without stopping."

It must not be overlooked, however, that some of the effects thus experienced appear to be due to the presence of impure air. For experiments made by De Saussure showed that air near the surface of snow contains less oxygen than the surrounding air; and Boussingault points out respecting "certain hollows and enclosed valleys of the higher part of Mont Blanc—in the *Corridor*, for instance—that people generally feel so unwell when traversing it that the guides long thought this part of the mountain impregnated with some mephitic exhalation. Thus even now, whenever the weather permits, people ascend by the *Bosses* ridge, where a purer air prevents the physiological disturbances from being so intense."

There are, indeed, parts of the earth where at an elevation nearly as great as that at which De Saussure experienced such unpleasant effects, the inhabitants of considerable cities enjoy health and strength. As Boussingault well remarks, "When one has seen the activity which goes on in towns like Bogota, Micuipampa, Potosi, &c., which have a height of from 8,500 feet to 13,000 feet; when one has witnessed the strength and agility of the torreadors in a bull fight at Quito (9,541 feet); when one has seen young and delicate women dance for the whole night long in localities almost as lofty as Mont Blanc; when one remembers that a celebrated combat, that of Pichincha, took place at a height as great as that of Monte Rosa (15,000 feet), it will be admitted that man can become habituated to the rarefied air of the highest mountains." These places are, however, tropical, and it is manifest that cold plays an important part in producing the unpleasant sensations which are experienced

in elevated regions. Since in Mars (according to our present assumption) we have not only a much greater atmospheric rarity than at the highest peak of the Himalayas, but also a much greater degree of cold than at such a height even in high latitudes, it is manifest that absolute uninhabitability by human beings must result. Nay, since no living things except microscopic animalcules exist above certain elevations, or when a certain degree of cold is experienced, it remains clear that Mars cannot possibly be inhabited by creatures resembling any of the higher forms of living beings with which we are familiar on earth. "Beyond the last stage of vegetation, beyond the extreme region attained by the insect and mammals, all becomes silent and uninhabited," says Flammarion, "though the air is still full of microscopic animalcules which the wind raises up like dust and which are disseminated to an unknown height."

But the reader may be led to ask, at this stage, what is actually taking place in Mars when our astronomers perceive signs as of clouds forming and dissolving, of morning and evening mists, and other phenomena not compatible, it should seem, with the idea of extreme cold. Nay, it is to be remembered that even the presence of ice and snow implies the action of heat. "Cold alone," says Tyndall, "will not produce glaciers. You may have the bitterest north-east winds here in London throughout the winter without a single flake of snow. Cold must have the fitting object to operate upon, and this object—the aqueous vapour of the air—is the direct product of heat." It is manifest, then, that the sun exerts enough heat on Mars to raise the vapour of water into the planet's atmosphere (as indeed spectroscopic analysis has taught us), and it is also clear that this vapour must be conveyed in some way to the Martial arctic regions, there to be precipitated in the form of snow. And then this difficulty is introduced: According to our ideas the whole surface of Mars is above the snow-line; any region on our earth where so great a degree of cold prevailed accompanied by so great an atmospheric tenuity would be far above the snow-line even at the equator. How is it then that the snow ever melts, as it manifestly does since we can see the ruddy surface of the planet?

An explanation, first suggested, we believe, in Mr. Mattien Williams's ingenious book called *The Fuel of the Sun*, removes this difficulty. The snow actually falling on Mars must be small in quantity, simply because the sun's heat is not competent to raise up any great quantity of water vapour. There cannot, then, be anything like the accumulation of snow which gathers in regions above our snow-line; but instead of this there must exist over the surface of Mars except near the poles a thin coating of snow, or rather there will be ordinarily a mere coating of hoar frost. Now the sun of Mars, though powerless to raise great quantities of vapour into the planet's tenuous atmosphere, is perfectly competent to melt and vaporize this thin coating of snow or hoar frost. The direct heat of the sun, shining through so thin an atmosphere, must be considerable wherever the sun is at a sufficient elevation; and of course the very tenuity of the air renders vaporization so much the easier, for

the boiling point (and consequently all temperatures of evaporation at given rates) would be correspondingly lowered.* Accordingly, during the greater part of the Martian day, the hoar frost and whatever light snow might have fallen on the preceding evening would be completely dissolved away, and thus the ruddy earth or the greenish ice-masses of the so-called oceans would be revealed to the terrestrial observer. We may picture the result by conceiving one of those Martian globes which Captain Busk has recently caused Messrs. Malby to make from Mr. Proctor's charts, to be first coated with thin hoar frost, and then held before a fire just long enough to melt the hoar frost on the part of the globe nearest to the fire, leaving the features of the rest of the globe concealed from view under their snow-white veil.

Those who have seen Mars under good telescopic "power" will at once recognise the exact agreement between this hypothetical process and the actual appearance of the planet. All round the border of the disc there is a white light completely concealing all the features of the Martian continents and oceans. Of this peculiarity no satisfactory explanation has hitherto been advanced. Mr. Proctor, indeed, has shown how the peculiarity would present itself if the Martian atmosphere were loaded with rounded clouds resembling our summer woolpack clouds; but it is a little difficult to believe that all over Mars such clouds as these are prevalent. Moreover, it is to be noticed that these woolpack clouds are morning and forenoon phenomena on our earth; towards noon they either vanish or become modified in shape, and as evening approaches the clouds ordinarily assume a totally different aspect, being extended in long flat sheets, the *stratus* cloud of the meteorologist. Even when rounded clouds are present in the evening sky, they are not the separate small white clouds absolutely essential, as it appears to us, for the theory advanced by Mr. Proctor; but the great heavy cloud is seen

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a labouring breast,
And topples round the dreary west
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

According to the views here suggested we have as the principal feature of Martian meteorology the melting of the coating of hoar frost (or of light snow, perhaps) from the ruddy soil of the planet and from the frozen surface of his oceans in the forenoon, and the precipitation of fresh snow or hoar frost when evening is approaching. Throughout the day the air

* Amongst other disadvantages presented by Mars, regarded as an abode for beings like ourselves, is the circumstance that if his atmosphere be in proportion to his mass, as we have assumed, it must be impossible to boil food properly on the ruddy planet. For water would boil at a temperature about seventy degrees below our boiling point, so that it would barely be heated enough to parboil. A cup of good tea is an impossibility in Mars, and equally out of the question is a well-boiled potato. It does not make matters more pleasant that the tea-plant and the potato are impossible, of themselves, on Mars, and that therefore the possibility of boiling them may be regarded as a secondary consideration.

remains tolerably clear, so far as can be judged from the telescopic aspect of the planet, though there is nothing to prevent the occasional accumulation of light cirrus or snow-clouds, especially in the forenoon. We believe, in fact, that the phenomena which have commonly been regarded as due to the precipitation of rain from true nimbus clouds over Martian oceans and continents must be ascribed to the dissipation of cirrus clouds by solar heat.

But we must not fall into the mistake of supposing that because the Martian atmosphere is at so low a pressure that Martian barometers (mercurial) probably stand at only four or five inches, the atmosphere is, therefore, exceedingly shallow. Even on our earth an atmosphere producing this amount of pressure would extend many miles above the sea-level, for as a matter of fact we know that at the height of eight or nine miles, only, the atmospheric pressure is thus reduced, and even the lowest estimates assign to the atmosphere a height of fifty miles, or roughly some forty miles above the height where the pressure corresponds to five inches of the common barometer. But in the case of Mars the atmospheric pressure diminishes much more slowly with altitude than on our own earth. We have only to climb to a height of three-and-a-half miles to find the pressure reduced to one-half (no matter what the height we start from); at seven miles it is reduced to one-fourth; and so on. But owing to the relatively small attraction of gravity in Mars a height of nine miles must be attained from his sea-level before the atmospheric pressure is reduced to one-half, and a height of eighteen miles before it is reduced to one-fourth, and so on. And instead of forty miles (which, as we have seen, is the lowest estimate of our air's height above the level where its pressure is like that of the Martian air), we find a height of fully seventy-five miles as the minimum. We may fairly assume that the Martian atmosphere extends to a height of at least 100 miles from the planet's surface.

In such an atmosphere there is ample scope for air-currents, and it is probable that owing to the tenuity of the air the winds in Mars would have a high velocity. They would not necessarily be violent winds, since the force of wind depends on the quantity of air which is in motion quite as much as on the velocity. So that we need not entertain the theory which was advanced some years since in the *Spectator*, that trees in Mars must be small in consequence of the great violence of Martian hurricanes by which all lofty trees would be destroyed. Even at a velocity of a hundred miles per hour, Martian winds would be less destructive than gales on earth blowing at the moderate rate of twenty miles per hour. But on a globe so small as that of Mars, compared at least with the earth's, swift air-currents would be very effective in carrying off from the central heated regions the moisture-laden air. In this way probably the polar snows of the planet are recruited. The polar regions must, in fact, act the part of veritable condensers, if the circulation of the Martian atmosphere is as brisk as it may well be believed to be. There must in that case be a continual gathering of fresh snows at the poles, and a continual

downward motion of the glaciers thus formed, accompanied necessarily by a very active abrasion and erosion of the planet's polar regions. It seems by no means improbable, moreover, that as Mr. Mattien Williams opines, there may be from time to time great catastrophes in these polar regions, produced by the toppling over or the rapid downward sliding of great glacial masses. For many considerations suggest that there must be an activity in the process of snow-gathering at the Martian poles altogether unlike anything known on our earth. It is noteworthy also that according to reliable observations changes have taken place in the aspect of the Martian snow-caps which imply catastrophes affecting ice-masses of enormous dimensions. Assuredly none of the changes taking place in our own polar regions could be discerned at so great a distance as separates us from Mars, save only the gradual increase and diminution of the extent of the snow-covering as winter or summer is in progress. An ice-mass as large as Spitzbergen or Nova Zembla would not be separately discernible from so great a distance, and therefore the complete destruction of such a mass by collision or downfall would be quite imperceptible at that distance, though it would be an inconceivably stupendous terrestrial catastrophe. But masses of Martian ice, quite readily discernible with good telescopes, have been found to disappear in a few hours, suggesting the most startling conceptions as to the effects which must have been produced on the comparatively small planet where these remarkable events have taken place.

The following observation, for instance, made by the late Professor Mitchel with the fine refractor of the Cincinnati Observatory, indicates the occurrence of an event which must have been accompanied by an inconceivable uproar,—

A wrack

As though the heavens and earth would mingle.

"I will record," he says, "a singular phenomenon connected with the snow-zone, which, so far as I know, has not been noticed elsewhere. On the night of July 12, 1845, the bright polar spot presented an appearance never exhibited at any preceding or succeeding observation. In the very centre of the white surface was a *dark spot*, which retained its position during several hours, and was distinctly seen by two friends who passed the night with me in the observatory. It was much darker, and better defined than any spot previously or subsequently observed here; and indeed after an examination of more than eighty drawings, I find no notice of a dark spot ever having been seen in the bright snow-zone. *On the following evening no trace of a dark spot was to be seen, and it has never since been visible.*" Does not this observation suggest that a great mass of ice had slipped away, leaving an intervening dark space, which in a few hours was snowed over, the gap remaining thereafter invisible? No other explanation, indeed, seems possible. But how tremendous a catastrophe to be discernible from a station some forty millions of miles away!

Granting even that Mitchel used a power of 1,200 (which we find given in *Loomis's Practical Astronomy* as the highest power of the Cincinnati telescope), Mars was still viewed as from a distance of 40,000 miles with the naked eye. Let any one who has observed the aspect of an Alpine region, as seen with the naked eye from a distance of forty miles (that region being known, so that he could estimate the degree by which distance reduced even the most imposing mountain features) consider what would be the effect of removing the point of view to a distance one thousand times greater. Not merely would a mountain-range, but a whole country, be invisible at such a distance. But add to these considerations the fact that the most stupendous mountain catastrophes are reduced apparently to utter insignificance at a distance of a few miles, and are altogether undiscernible at a distance of thirty or forty miles, and we shall be able to understand, though we remain utterly unable to conceive, the vastness of the catastrophe on Mars, the effects of which could be discerned when viewed as by the naked eye from a distance of 40,000 miles. One would imagine that the very frame of the small planet must have been shaken.

It does not appear to us altogether unlikely that the varying accounts which astronomers have given respecting the polar flattening of Mars may find their true explanation in the theory we have been considering. It is certainly remarkable that eminent astronomers, like Sir W. Herschel, Arago, Dawes, Bessel, Hind, Main, and others, should have arrived at the most conflicting results on an observational matter of such extreme simplicity. We have values of the compression varying from Sir Wm. Herschel's, who made the polar diameter of the planet a full sixteenth less than the equatorial diameter, to Dawes's result, that the planet is not flattened at all. Nay, some observations have even suggested that the planet is elongated at the poles. If great changes of elevation take place at the poles of Mars, owing to the rapid process of accumulation of the Martian snows, these discrepancies would be accounted for.

But whatever opinion we form on details of this sort, it appears tolerably clear that in all its leading features the planet Mars is quite unlike the earth, and unfit to be the abode of creatures resembling those which inhabit our world. Neither animal nor vegetable forms of life known to us could exist on Mars. To the creatures which thrive in our arctic regions or near the summits of lofty mountains, the torrid zone of Mars would be altogether too bleak and dismal for existence to be possible there. Our hardiest forms of vegetable life would not live a single hour if they could be transplanted to Mars. Life, animal as well as vegetable, there may indeed be on the ruddy planet. Reasoning creatures may exist there as on the earth. But all the conditions of life in Mars, all that tends to the comfort and well being of Martian creatures, must differ so remarkably from what is known on earth, that to reasoning beings on Mars the idea of life on our earth must appear wild and fanciful in the extreme, if not altogether untenable.



"JUST LISTEN HOW I CAN SHAKE."

Zelda's Fortune.

BOOK III.

OFF THE STAGE.

CHAPTER I.

THE CRITIC.



W HATEVER might be the incapacity of Mdlle. Leczinska's pockets to contain her future wealth, Harold Vaughan's were amply large enough to contain his present poverty. The beggar girl and the doctor had so far changed places that what she was promised for singing a song six times a week he would have considered a generous reward for the purchase of his brain for a year. He was in such an exceptionally unlucky posi-

tion that he had not a friend in all London to whom he could apply for advice of the cheapest kind. If he had devoted his student days to billiards instead of his profession he would have been better off: he could think of a dozen men who had wasted their season of study and were now reaping fees for their pains, as comfortably as if they had never sown a wild oat in their lives. If he had cultivated his body instead of his brain, he would have been at no loss; he could have returned into the ranks and found health and content in hewing wood and drawing water. It is all very well to say that the world is wide and that everybody can find something to do: the theory would be perfect if everybody could live upon air till the something is found.

Still, though life did not seem much worth keeping, something had to be

done to keep it. The Claudia episode had crushed out all that he had ever possessed of elasticity: ambition had not time to take the place of love, and he felt ashamed of himself, as though occupied in something unutterably mean, in having to give his whole energies and to devote his whole powers to the task of how he should contrive simply not to starve in solitude. The more he thought over the matter, the less he despised himself for his misfortunes, and the more, I fear, he tried to shift the blame from his own shoulders to hers. He did not quite succeed, but as he wished to preserve his self-respect in the teeth of chance, and as he thought he had to blame somebody, he was compelled to blame her. He passed in review every possible manner in which he could waste his life to the best advantage, from being a law-stationer's copying clerk up to enlisting in the line. To wait for Lord Lisburn's recovery, even if it should prove but a matter of days, would require too long a fast even for a Bedouin who dined on dates, or for a hermit who broke fast on miracles: and he was tired himself of depending on the random patronage of stray peers. A steerage passage to Australia, suggested by his barren appointment to the *Esmeralda*, would be too dear to a man who could not raise half a crown. Of course he read every word of *The Times'* advertisements, and found nothing that would not require delay. At last he was wearied out with walking and thinking, but did not return to his lodgings: pride prevented his sleeping in a bed that he could not pay for. He walked the streets, and thought on.

At about four in the morning he passed a coffee-stall, where he thought he might as well dine cheaply. It was not far from Covent Garden. While enjoying his cup of brown water and slice of bread even more than he had enjoyed Lord Lisburn's champagne, he felt a slap between the shoulders, and, colouring with shame at his occupation, turned round and saw Carol.

"Been making a night of it, eh?" asked the latter. "That's right—I generally make a street breakfast myself. One sees life and human nature and all that sort of thing. There's nothing like morning air: so I take it late as I can't get it early. Just look round, and don't tell me there's a street in Venice like the Strand. Is this the first time you're breakfasting at a coffee-stall? I'll join you, and we'll stand bread and butter all round—we'll feed the unfeathered sparrow. There—help yourselves all round," he said triumphantly to the doctor's half-dozen ragged companions: "bread and butter for everybody, and nothing to pay. What does it all come to? Have you got any change about you, Vaughan? I'm the poorest man going, you know, and the most consistent: I never have any change about me. Here, man, you're not helping yourself: go ahead: we pay for all. Pray, may I ask you, my dear sir, if you always squint like that? Because I flattered myself that I knew of a unique specimen."

The man, who had covered up the lower part of his face with a thick comforter and had already edged away to the farthest corner of the stall, suddenly laid down his cup and walked quickly away.

"That's Politeness!" said Carol. "Never mind: there's more for the rest of you. I say, Vaughan, just hand me your spare coppers: I'll pay you next time."

It was an unfortunate meeting, for by the time the coffee-merchant's stock was exhausted in the exercise of a charity for which Carol managed to get the credit, Harold Vaughan's intended cheap dinner had reached the limit of his means. There was nothing left but to fill his empty pockets with his pride, for the want of something more substantial.

"You are on the press?" he asked of the man whom he was disposed to especially dislike and despise.

"I on the press! You mean the Press is on Me. You might as well say Atlas, or what's his name, was on the world."

"Then you might happen to know of things—situations I mean—that a man could fill who, like me, can read and write and has some medical and scientific knowledge——"

"Situations? Hundreds—thousands—millions. Miles and hundred-weights of them. What do you want? A consulship—an inspectorship—from police to factories——"

"I'm not so ambitious. I only want something to do that isn't exactly picking oakum or breaking stones."

"I see. By Jove—just the very thing. Come with me—Brandon's off duty now, and I know where to find him."

"Brandon—who's he?"

"Didn't you meet him at the Oberon? He's just made editor of the *Trumpet*: I got it for him. They wanted me, but I like to work behind the scenes and pull the strings. He'll pay you like a prince and work you like a slave."

"On a newspaper? I've never written in my life—and as for newspapers, I scarcely even look at *The Times*."

"So much the better. Brandon will do the grammar and spelling—that's what he's paid for. Between you and I, that's what he's fit for. He's written books, but they never sold Mr. Brandon in? Just going? All right: you needn't announce me Brandon, I think you know my old friend Vaughan? Well, he's just the man for you: knows all about everything and can write like Byron—better than you, old fellow—splendid, by Jove."

"You want to join our new staff, Mr. Vaughan? I'm very busy now, so you must let me get over the ground quickly. What can you do? Have you had experience elsewhere?"

"None whatever. I'm only a man in want of a bad day's wage for a hard day's work. That's no recommendation, I know."

"It's not wise to say so, though. I've been in the same boat myself, and, now I'm out of it, I confess it's no recommendation in my own eyes. All the same, honesty's not such very bad policy. But you have written, Carol says? I really read so little that it is nothing against an author's fame for me to be ignorant of him."

"Never a word."

"Just what I was saying," broke in Carol. "You don't want men to write fine English, you know: you want men who know all about everything."

"Certainly omniscience would be an advantage. But what is your special line? So long as you're not a failure in fiction like myself, or a failure in facts, like our friend Carol, I don't much mind what. Politics—Reviewing—Finance——"

"Certainly not Finance. In fact I am ashamed of letting myself be brought here to take up your time. I am a physician, and all the knowledge I can boast of is what I picked up at Guy's."

"Yes—I forgot to say that," interrupted Carol. "The very thing—a physician: a man who knows man: science—coroners' inquests—lunacy—hospital scandals—cholera—sanitary reform—the Lisburn case—By the way, he knows all about that——"

"So does everybody; thanks to the *Trumpet*."

"Thanks to me."

"Yes, a nice story you told me, every word contradicted by Lord Lisburn's own lawyer."

"That's gratitude! I appeal to Doctor Vaughan."

"Who was not present," said Harold, quickly, "and is no longer in the case, besides."

"Well—I like news, but I like discretion, too. By the way, were you ever in practice? You won't mind my asking you?"

The doctor saw well enough that he was being treated as a Failure in his old profession, and a novice in his new. But his whole candidature for a place on the *Trumpet* seemed to him so utterly absurd, that he did not feel the least inclination to slur over his disadvantages. He felt that Brandon wanted to be rid of him, and he was ashamed of letting himself be brought there in the character of an impostor."

"Yes—for a short time at St. Bavons. But as there were more doctors than patients——"

"You're a St. Bavons man?" exclaimed Brandon, with a sudden change of manner. "You know Grayport, then, and Farleigh, and all that country?"

"Well."

The mutual influence of four or five people upon one another make up but one fragment, even of their common story. A drama without side-winds and indirect influences from without is false to life, though it may be according to rule. I cannot, for the sake of dramatic unity, ignore the fact that Maurice Brandon had a story of his own, and that this side-wind had an indirect influence upon the prospects of Harold Vaughan. For the few who are sufficiently versed in family affairs to know how and why Maurice Brandon came to marry Rose Corbet of Grayport near St. Bavons—who chance to know how one who had in his time known failure far more bitter than Harold Vaughan, and had found life, and love, and

sympathy in "all that country"—there is no need to say why "St. Bavons" was a magic word to him. For the many who do not know these things, I need only say that in naming St. Bavons, Harold Vaughan had lighted upon an "open Sesame."

"Well then," said the husband of Rose Corbet of Grayport, "I don't mind if I give you a trial. Only a trial, mind. Carol will say it's for love of his bright eyes—believe it or not, as you please. Bring me something to-morrow. Do you understand pictures? Because you can go to an exhibition this afternoon. I don't want technicalities—anybody can do that who's been in town a season. I've got lots of that article. What I want is a man with no friends to puff up, and no friends' enemies to blow down—to say what he likes and doesn't like, and to give the great British public a few plain reasons in support of its own verdicts. I want you to put the talk of the galleries into good grammar, that's all, and to steer clear of technicalities and sympathies with particular schools. Common sense and common English, nothing less or more. Above all, no pedantry, and say just what you really think about everybody without the least fear of being wrong—the humbug's Carol's department, and the pedantry's my own. But I have no time to explain: you must catch my meaning, and I shall see if you do. You don't know any painters?"

"None."

"You don't know one school from another?"

"I don't even know what they are."

"Have you seen many pictures? Are you fond of them, as young ladies say?"

The straight line between Harold's eyebrows deepened. His recollections of pictures and of St. Bavons were not *couleur de Rose*, like Brandon's.

"I don't think I should be wrong in saying I detest them."

"Bravo! The very man for my outside critic. Go—here's a pass for the season—and detest as many as you please. Scatter the dove-cotes, but don't be a universal kite: when you see anything you think very good, don't stint your praise. Have no enemies, and no friends. When you've been long enough in the work to make friends in the profession, perhaps I'll let you loose on the musical world, and so on, till you have no more worlds to conquer. You shall represent the universal ignorance of omniscience. Carol already represents the omniscience of universal ignorance, and I hold the balance between the two to save you both from being found out in your blunders. I won't ask you to do your very best this time, but please to do as well as you can; and we'll talk business to-morrow."

"There—what do you think of that?" asked Carol, as they left the office. "Ah, there's lots of money flying about the world only waiting for people to open their mouths wide enough to ask for some. I see you're one of them that think you can't play the fiddle because you never tried. That's all humbug. Only stand up and flourish your fiddlestick boldly,

and all the deaf people will think Paganini nothing to you. And between you and I, it's the deaf people that pay to hear. I explained all that to Brandon long ago. Blowing one's own trumpet's no good—it only sets other people trying to out-blow you. No—flourish your fiddlestick, and always look as if you were just going to begin."

"I daresay you're right—though I can't say I admire the theory. But suppose one hasn't even a fiddlestick to flourish?"

"Then take a cart-whip, and flourish with that—That's Criticism."

"That seems to be the very thing I have to do, according to my instructions. But may I ask—I have been thinking ever since I met you to-day—to what possible cause I can owe the good offices of so complete a stranger? Of course, I am infinitely obliged, but still——"

"Ah, you're thinking of nothing for nothing? *Homo sum—nihilo alienum*—you know what I mean. By Jove, I saw you were the very man for an art critic the moment I set eyes on you. I'm never wrong: never made a mistake in spotting a man since I was born. Didn't I bring out Brandon? Didn't I bring out the Leczinska, who'll be at the top of the tree before this week's out? And do you think I did it because I cared for them? Not I. I do things because I choose, and like to stand behind and pull the wires. I've made a man a bishop before now: it's worth while to be my friend, I can tell you. You mayn't think it, but there isn't a man going who'd be exactly what he is if it wasn't for Denis Carol. And they all know it, too. And yet I'm the poorest man in Europe—yes, I, Denis Carol, who could be a millionaire any day if the fancy seized me. But I don't please: I hate money: I shouldn't be half the man I am if I wasn't poor. A pipe, a crust, and a garret—that's Fortune. You think it's the rich that rule the world; not they: it's the men with nothing to lose. I wouldn't cross the road to pick up ten pounds a week, nor twenty. By the way, old fellow, now you're on the *Trumpet* you can do something for a friend of mine—that Leczinska girl. She isn't a bad sort."

"I don't know what sort she may be, but as you know, she is no friend of mine. Who is she—I mean off the stage?"

"Oh, the dearest girl in the world—a hundred a week, on my word of honour. They thought no end of her in Warsaw. You'll give her a lift, won't you?"

"I really don't see how."

"Never mind how—that's my affair."

"Well," thought Harold Vaughan, as he turned into the gallery, "I suppose I mustn't quarrel with my bread and butter. But is my whole life to consist of nothing but chances? No sooner do I make up my mind to follow medicine at St. Bavons than I find myself volunteering for the North Pole; no sooner do I make up my mind to go to the North Pole, than I find myself made Art Critic to a newspaper in London—the very last thing on earth for which I'm fitted. But it's no good speculating any more. I will give in to destiny, and think myself lucky that Fortune is

at any rate determined that I shall not starve. As for Carol—no, I won't even speculate about him. And if I wake to-morrow and find myself a millionaire or a murderer—the two least possible things I can think of—I will be surprised at nothing. No—not if I become Claudia's husband."

Thus he jested with himself bitterly as at the butt of blindfold destiny, and then plunged into the mazes of his catalogue. The painter of No. I. would have felt flattered if he could have seen how long the critic stood before it in apparent contemplation of its merits. But I doubt if when the critic passed on to No. II. he had any definite idea as to whether it had represented a cabbage or a cow.

CHAPTER II.

THE CURTAIN.

ONE day up and another day down: that had been Zelda's experience of the rolling world from the day she was born. To barter her bracelets for a crust of bread on Thursday and to ride in her own carriage on Friday was a pleasant contrast, but not at all strange. If the people of England had suddenly come round her and crowned her their queen, she would have accepted her election as part of an unintelligible but perfectly natural course of events: as not a whit more wonderful than being paid in pounds instead of pence for singing a song. It is only readers of history and biography upside down that are ever astonished at the wildest pranks of Fortune. Moreover, it is said that people never feel astonished in dreams, and the life of Zelda, if not literally a dream, was very like one.

And yet, when do we live more intensely than when we dream? It is among the visions of sleep, not among those of waking, that we grow old and white-haired. There are people who never dream, happily or unhappily for them, and such people never grow old. After all, the body claims at least half our care and thought when our eyes are open: when our eyes are shut, it claims nothing. In sleep, rage, love, despair, terror, shame, remorse, all the tumultuous host of the passions, take prisoner the unguarded soul. It is in a single night that men's hairs have grown white suddenly: never in a single day. Then we have no shield of common sense to keep off ghosts, no friendly shelter wherein to hide from them. Our lovers and friends are far from us, though by our sides: we are alone in chaos. If any one will question himself honestly, he will find that no actual emotion has ever equalled in intensity the night fancies which he laughs at when he wakes and mostly forgets by the end of breakfast-time.

It is something of this sort that I wished to suggest by piling upon Zelda's shoulders the burden not of one but of three lives. Of course I

know that everybody has at least three lives, if not nine : but then in most cases the lives are all so inextricably fused and jumbled together that to say which is which is well-nigh impossible. But hers was as distinct as those of three persons. In the first place—firstly, because most obviously—she was *Mdlle. Pauline Leczinska*. She, that is to say, *Mdlle. Pauline*, was a bundle of whims and caprices, that never slept and never dreamed. It was she that ate and drank, rolled about in her carriage, laughed a great deal, and enjoyed life after a fashion. It was she who had risen to her new circumstances like a sky-rocket, or rather like a captive balloon that has broken its cords. Finally, it was she, not *Sylvia* and not *Zelda*, to whom Lord Lisburn introduced himself for the second time.

Very different was the panorama which opened itself before him to the morning shadows of midnight brawls and drunken mischief in which Harold Vaughan had made his second acquaintance with *Zelda*. He fairly woke up one morning to find himself lying in a strange room ; the nurse was away, and, in spite of his weakness, there seemed nothing for him to do but to proceed on a voyage of discovery—he was not one to throw upon memory any work that could be done with his eyes. He managed to dress, but to open the folding door was to him to open too soon the gate that leads to health from sickness. He had scarcely yet felt the floor, and his head was full of the unwholesome atmosphere of the back bed-room in which he had so long been imprisoned, so that the sudden change of light, air, and odour made his brain reel for an instant, and his feet unable to advance farther than the back of the nearest chair. He had been strong enough to escape from the nurse's kingdom, but was not yet strong enough to bear the atmosphere of any other. The first stage of convalescence, like the first struggle out of a fainting-fit, is itself a pain worse than the disease. All sorts of formless associations and recollections crowd themselves into a moment upon a brain incapable of coping with half of them. He to whom the open sea breezes had been daily food, suddenly felt himself ready to swoon at the delicate fragrance of a few nosegays, and at the feeble radiance of a London sun.

He made no attempt, after Harold Vaughan's fashion, to take in all the details of the new scene, and to bring them into unity with a single glance of the eye. As soon as the momentary giddiness was over, he was content to let his sight rest upon the various unconnected details with a sort of languid and passive effort, which was half pleasure and half pain. The room was still in a state of litter, but the litter was no longer ungraceful. Wine-stains and blood-stains, and even dust-stains, had been long ago cleared away. The mark of Aaron's knife in Golden Square was not fated to be so indelible as that of Rizzio's butchers in Holyrood. Everything made up a picture of still-life that would have driven a tidy housewife wild, but would have done a painter's heart good to look upon, for the sake of its brilliant contrasts and brilliant colours. All the furniture had indeed the unpicturesque fault of being brand new,

from cornice to threshold ; but its hues and materials were dashed in with a sublime contempt for the conventional proprieties of house decoration in all their forms. The lady of the bower, whoever she might be, had no more scruple about offending against all recognised laws of colour, as they are understood by civilised people, than Nature herself has in painting sunsets and humming-birds. There were no half hues and tints that are ashamed of being downright colours ; everything was uncompromisingly red, green, white, yellow, or blue. It was all as if a child or a savage had been given *carte blanche* at an extravagant upholsterer's. A sort of barbaric but healthy vigour had taken the place of taste ; and the result, although bizarre, had accordingly a harmony of its own. Everything that could be bright was brilliant ; everything that might be of gold was gilded so as to look like gold : even the tablecloths were of amber velvet, and the screens of peacocks' feathers. A thick turkey carpet, of gorgeous pattern, was the plainest piece of furniture in the room, which moreover was remarkable for being crowded with wholly unnecessary things. Thus there were at least six clocks, all going, and all going wrong : there was venetian glass enough to stock a shop with ; inkstands without pens or ink ; work-baskets without work ; a dozen writing-desks ; half-a-dozen mirrors ; and any number of vases, many of them heaped up with mountains of fresh and faded bouquets, not ranged with any symmetry, but apparently allowed to walk about and use the tables and chairs according to their own whim or pleasure. The general arrangement of all the wilderness of toys was equally singular. The largest table was thrust into a corner, as if of no use but to serve as the couch of a large white cat, while its proper place was occupied by a grand piano, rising out of a billowy sea of ragged music that threatened to overwhelm it in time. There were no books and no pictures : under one of the wide-open windows was heaped up a pile of sofa cushions ; in the other, a gay-coloured foreign bird was pluming himself and chattering to the sparrows of the square, and a musical-box was amusing the white cat with "*Du, Du liegst mir im Herzen.*"

It was odd to hear the poor little German waltz tune playing all alone to a white cat in the sunshine : but even that seemed to be somehow in keeping. Lord Lisburn let himself sink into the chair, and allowed himself to feel as though at least one foot of his had strayed into fairy-land. The scent of the innumerable bouquets began to steal into his blood, and to intoxicate his enfeebled nerves, so that he even began to forget that he badly needed bodily food. He was being surfeited with a feast such as people eat in dreams. Golden Square is never noisy, so that though the windows were open, none of the coarser sounds of London made their way in : the air carried with it no more than the faintest humming from the surrounding hive of human bees and drones. Presently Lord Lisburn's eyes began to see through the lids instead of between them : the smell of the flowers began to sound like a distant chorus of waves and voices, and the waltz tune to

turn into a faint perfume. I am not sure that he did not fancy himself on board the *Esmeralda*, bound with a cargo of cats and peacocks for the North Pole. In a word, he began to doze, and finally went off into the calmest, healthiest, and most dreamless sleep that he had known since he was a child.

When he woke, it was with a start: he seemed to have dropped down from far off skies, and come with force to the ground. He felt more weak than in the morning, and yet curiously refreshed. His eyes opened without an effort, and the first thing they noticed was trivial enough—the cat was gone. Possibly, however, it had but changed its shape; for the second thing that his eyes noticed was the presence of a companion in this nook of dreamland. It was a woman, of course; but that was all he could tell, for though she was dressed for indoors, her face was closely covered by a black lace veil. The musical-box was still playing the same tune over and over again, and as his sleep had been dreamless it seemed to him that the transformation of the white cat had been accomplished in about the space of a demi-semi-quaver.

His first impulse was to start to his feet; and he followed it as suddenly as his weakness allowed. She noticed the movement, and turned, but neither rose nor raised her veil.

Lord Lisburn had far too modest an opinion of himself to be shy, but on this occasion he certainly felt his tongue tied—partly, perhaps, from not having used it so long. But if there was one thing on which he piqued himself, it was upon being at home in all manner of strange adventures, and as this was about the strangest in which he had ever found himself, he felt that his rôle in life obliged him to be more than ever master of the situation.

"I am sure I beg your pardon with all my heart, Mademoiselle," he began, for the sake of saying something. "The fact is, I can scarcely tell you exactly how I came here: I am sure I don't know for certain where I am. Is it really true that I have been your guest for I don't know how long without knowing it? I only wish I could think of some way to tell you how awfully ashamed I am of myself. Surely this is not the room where that row happened after supper? You must really forgive me, for to tell you the truth I am not sure whether I'm on my head or my heels."

The girl sat still for a moment, and then, with a sort of running leap, threw herself down on her knees before him and kissed his hand through her veil.

"There," she said, as she stood up again and drew herself back as if to have a good look at him: "Now I'm better. So you were not to die after all."

"Not this time, thank God. And I must thank you too. How in the world can I thank you?"

"Thank me? Why?"

"How can you ask why? Haven't I been turning the whole place into

a hospital, and made myself a nuisance to you for weeks? My only excuse is that I made sure they'd taken me back to the hotel. My whole mind seems like a blank. Have you really been taking care of me all this while?"

"Not at all I haven't. I wanted to badly, but first they wouldn't let me, and then——"

His face fell a little; he would have liked to think that he had been nursed like a wounded knight-errant by the lady in whose cause he had done battle.

"Well," he said, "you have been hostess all the same. But who were 'they?' I don't seem to remember anybody. Was it Vaughan?"

She shrugged her shoulders almost up to her ears. "No—not he," she answered. "I think I frightened him off."

"Who was it then? I don't suppose that old woman came out of charity."

"I'm sure I don't know what they were. There was the doctor they called Sir Godfrey, and my Lady Penrose was sending after you every day with broth and jellies; you couldn't eat them, but they were very good; the nurse didn't like them, so she used to give them to me."

"By Jove," he thought to himself, "I fancied a romance, and the heroine of it was only eating up broth and jellies. The little glutton! And how coolly she owns it too. I shall begin to think she is the cat in good earnest. But has the cat had no time to change her face as well as her shape, that she keeps her veil down? And Vaughan—what can have happened to him?—I'm sure you were quite welcome, Mademoiselle. So Lady Penrose has been doing the maternal, as usual—anybody else?"

"I don't know—I never used to see them, and nobody was let in to you."

"Then Vaughan may have called after all. But do you know that you could really do something for me—better than all the nursing in the world?"

"What is it? I should be so glad. It was so bad for me that I couldn't do anything."

"I'm afraid you'll think it abominably common-place."

"Common-place? What's that?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, it means something that certainly has very little to do with you."

"What is it, then? What do you want me to do?"

"Just to get me a crust of bread and cheese. I'm simply famished—and if you could ask for a glass of beer besides——"

"In a moment. But I'll give you something better than bread and cheese." And she ran at once to one of her sideboards.

"Not chicken-broth or jelly, I hope?"

"No—some real chicken. I always eat poultry, though somehow it isn't half as nice as when I used to catch them."

"Mademoiselle seems to be a *gourmette*," he thought, not noticing

her last piece of autobiography. "All the better, under present circumstances."

"And what will you drink?—I'm afraid I haven't any brandy; but if you can manage with Moselle—"

"Manage with it? Why, do you think I'm an ogre, to offer me brandy at this time of day?"

"I thought men always liked brandy best. There—there's the fowl and there's the Moselle." She placed the food, without a cloth, on an impracticable sort of work-table, pulled a knife out of a card-rack and a fork from a porcelain jar.

"I'm sure you will let me thank you now—if you did not visit the sick, you are certainly feeding the hungry. Shall I give you some wine?"

"No; I never drink anything but water, and sometimes coffee."

"Well, she doesn't drink—that's a relief," he thought to himself, as he threw himself upon the fowl. But his satisfaction with her behaviour was of short duration. She took a good-sized cigarette out of an empty bird-cage, lighted it, and puffed it quietly as she looked at him. But although she thus allowed him to see her lips and chin, the veil still covered her eyes.

"I have surely strayed into the Arabian Nights," thought the imitator of Sinbad. "I can see the lady is not hare-lipped, and that is all. Does she intend that veil to serve as a challenge or only to mystify me? I'm sure she can't want to hide her eyes; and if that is so, I suppose she is only waiting to be asked to show them."

He had barely tasted the wine, but the few mouthfuls of chicken that he had been able to swallow had got into his head, as often happens to too eager convalescents. As he seemed in for an adventure, he might as well make the most of it.

"That cigarette of yours looks very nice," he said. "Do you make them yourself? I think I'll join you. No; I won't have any more wine. And now," he added after a few moments of returning sleepiness, "I'm going to ask you to do me another favour."

"As much as you like."

"Will you let me see if my hostess is really Mademoiselle Leczinska or some fairy princess?"

"You mean take off my veil?"

"Please—unless you are a nun, which I'm sure you're not, or a Turkish lady, which I don't think you are."

"No—I can't do that."

"What—not grant me so easy a favour? Do you never let your face be seen? Is not that rather cruel?"

"There are things that ought to be seen and things that ought not to be seen. My eyes are things that ought not to be seen."

"Why, what a mysterious person you are, Mademoiselle! Are you afraid of burning me up with a flash of lightning? I am quite strong enough to see a woman's face, I assure you."

"No—you have seen them once too often. You shan't see them again. There—that's enough of that."

"What—never? Why, the once that I saw them wasn't half enough. Come—just for one moment."

"Not for one."

"But——"

"Do you want to make me angry?"

"Yes—if that will make you unveil. No, I don't mean that," he added, noticing real impatience in her tone. "But if you have any reason for hiding your eyes except that they are too beautiful——"

"They are hateful."

"Is that why?"

"I won't take off my veil—that's why."

"But do you never let people see your eyes—not even on the stage?"

"Never mind what I do on the stage. People must take their chance then, and I must take mine."

"Then it is only from me that you wish to hide? Then," he added, to himself, "it is a challenge, after all. I had better pretend not to care—I daresay she'll let her mask drop fast enough then." He was just at the age when men think that they understand all the tricks of women and that they are able to play at cat and mouse with them.

"Well then," he said with the air of a man who did not care three straws about the matter, "I must suppose that I must console myself with thinking myself in company with a kind-hearted Basilisk. Anyway you are first-cousin to the Sphinx: and I'm no hand at guessing riddles: I give it up."

"I'm glad of that—you don't know how unhappy you made me, talking in that way."

"Let's talk of something else: though if you use your voice I don't exactly see what is gained by your shutting your eyes. Tell me first about that fellow Aaron. Has he been caught?"

"Not he!"

"Haven't the police been after him?"

"Oh yes—they're after him. But that's another thing I don't want to talk about. I've done with Aaron."

"So have I, I hope. By the way, we were talking about Vaughan—I've sent for him. You and he haven't been quarrelling, have you?"

"Quarrelling? No. But—but——"

"But what? Don't you like him? I'm sorry for that, for he's the best fellow in the world."

"I know that. But—don't let us talk about Dr. Vaughan." Her cigarette was out, and she tossed it away sharply, without looking to see where it fell.

"I wonder what she will talk about. Hang it, I must get her to say something. Well, I'll make another try before I'm reduced to the weather. Are you still singing at the Oberon?"

"Every night."

"And still in *Sylvia's Bracelet*? That's splendid: I shall come and hear you again. And all these bouquets—I suppose they are your scalps—I mean your trophies?"

She looked round her room proudly. "Yes, I keep them all, as you see. There's just a hundred and forty-four. What comes next to a hundred and forty-four? I am learning to count from flowers. When I sit here among them all I feel that I am somebody: they all grow out of my singing."

"You don't throw them away, even when they fade?"

"I like to see lots of faded ones: they make things seem ever so much longer ago."

"You won't always think that," he said, with all the wisdom of six-and-twenty. "And how do you like England?"

"England? Oh, you mean London? I don't much care. I'm treated very well. I should like it better if there was room to breathe in."

"I feel that too. You like the country, then? I think we should agree—I'm never myself, except when I'm on the sea. I shall soon be with my wife again now." He used his favourite metaphor less from habit than from a wish to see what effect it might have upon her. But he was disappointed again—it simply had no effect at all. So he was obliged ignominiously to explain. "I mean my yacht, the *Esmeralda*. If it had not been for that fellow Aaron I should have been half way to the North Pole by this time. Not but what I should have lost a pleasant adventure, so I ought to be grateful to him after all. Have you made many voyages? I know that prima donnas think nothing of a voyage round the world."

"Do they? Oh, that would be the best of all! I get so tired of sitting still. I've never been on the sea."

"What—not when you came from Poland?"

"Oh, that was nothing—I mean——"

"I know: you don't call being in one of those beastly steamers sailing—no more do I."

"And are you really going all over the world?"

"I'm going to try and get where nobody has ever been before."

"How I wish I was you!"

"There's something in that girl," he thought. "Well, I've found something that she can talk about at last." "Something that I like to talk about," he meant to say, but his confusion of persons was only natural. Without any more beating round the bush, he plunged at once into a lecture upon Arctic possibilities that called the colour to his face, and would ensure a certain amount of sympathy even from those who cared nothing for his hobby. Nor, for once, though the experiment was dangerous, did he run any risk of being thought a bore. Zelda peeped out through Mille. Leczinska, and really enjoyed her feast of new and unheard-

of wonders. Indeed she even outstripped him. He touched upon the fancy that the Earthly Paradise may be situated beyond the walls of eternal ice and snow : she seized on the idea at once, and would not hear of its possibly being untrue. She was receiving her first lesson in the poetry, not of emotion, but of fancy, and many a man who has once been a child can remember to his last hour the moment in which this revelation came to him. Lord Lisburn, in his talk, was neither poet nor orator : but both poetry and eloquence are comparative, and both were unknown worlds to her. Her own vocabulary was too small, like her knowledge, to enable her to do more than express wonder and admiration ; but this was enough for her Homer. It was not wonderful that the Earl, though better read in a desultory way than most people, and an author besides, thought her the cleverest, most intelligent and best informed woman that he had ever met with. He only wished that he had *Sinbad* in his pocket to give her a presentation copy there and then.

Sir Godfrey Bowes would probably have shaken his head over this premature energy on the part of his patient. But it was still early, and his daily visit was not due for some hours to come. Mdlle. Leczinska was a thoughtless nurse : she knew nothing about illness or of the difference between being and seeming well. So on this couple of grown-up children drove, through a paradise of Esquimaux, seals, sea-kings, sagas and songs. Indeed, there was no reason why the conversation should ever come to an end, seeing that everything was new to Zelda from the beginning. Of course she did not understand half she heard, but this made it all the more fascinating. Nor was she behindhand in teaching Lord Lisburn a few things that were new even to him. To her, those wonderful countries of his were above all things the dwelling places of stranger beings than even the Hyperborean Islanders.

"And that," he wound up, "is the farthest point that any ship has ever been known to sail to."

"Ah!" she said, "and beyond that, you say, is that wonderful place that no one has ever found. But it seems to me everybody has forgotten something."

"What is that?"

"You have said nothing of the guards. How are you to get through them?"

"What guards? There are no living creatures there but bears."

"You mean those dancing creatures? But they're no harm. I knew a bear once, and he was as friendly as could be. No; I mean Egin."

"Egin? And who in the world is he?"

"And you so wise? Why, the King of the North Wind—where else should he be? He's not as bad as some of the others, they say, and he's often helped people who know how to rule him."

Lord Lisburn was more polite than Harold Vaughan had been under not dissimilar circumstances. "Why," he only asked, "do you mean one ought to take holy water, as well as beef and biscuit?"

"Don't talk in that way, please. I don't know about holy water; but I know that people have been torn limb from limb."

"What; you really believe in demons? I shall begin to think you are a witch, and that is why you hide your eyes."

"Oh! don't speak of my eyes."

"How can I help it? That's your fault, not mine. Well, if I come across the King of the North Wind, I shall be prepared. Anyway, he can't be a tougher customer than my friend Aaron."

"I wish I could tell you what to do. I only know that he rides upon a dragon and wears a crown, but is sometimes like a child; and if you can make him like that, he'll do you more good than hurt, and tell you where to look for gold. His spirits are like snakes, and make a noise like bulls."

"You don't mean to say you've seen him?"

"No; but he's been seen by them that know how to make him come. I wish I knew."

"I wish you did, with all my heart—I'm sure I don't. But are you really in earnest?"

"What—don't you know it's as true as the stars in the sky? Do you believe only what you see?"

"As you are so serious, yes, I do. But who on earth ever taught you all this nonsense—I mean all these things?"

"Of course you can't know what I know; you're not—but never mind. Who taught me? Why, who taught you what you believe?"

"I would give anything to see your face; I would believe in the King of the North Wind, dragon and all."

"I am not wise myself; but I have lived with them that are. Look at me, so that I can see you well. I thought so; you are running into fearful danger, unless you are warned."

"Of course I am running into danger; I don't think I could live out of it. But are you a fortune-teller?"

"I am nothing. But it will be mad to go among the demons, you who laugh at them, and without a wise man."

"Is that all? Oh, then you may make yourself easy: I'm going to take a very wise man, indeed."

She shook her head. "I doubt you know a wise man when you see one," she said gravely.

"Thank you for the compliment. But I think I know one—I mean Harold Vaughan."

"Harold Vaughan!"

She started so suddenly, that a suspicion leaped into Lord Lisburn's brain.

"Yes; why not? Don't you think him a wise man?"

"I don't think anything of him," she said with a toss of head that almost shook her veil down. To his own astonishment, he felt as though one corner of his heart had been touched by the tip of a cold finger. But,

as he was not the least in love—how should he be?—the suspicion that the finger-tip might belong to jealousy was too absurd to be recognised.

"I'm sorry you don't like Vaughan, though. He saved my life once," he went on, defending his friend from an attack that had never been made, "and is a first-rate fellow. He'll make a name, and I'm proud to have him. I wonder why he doesn't come, though? Perhaps he was out—by Jove, do you know I've been boring you for three whole hours? I wish you'd give me another glass of wine; what a baby I feel. Never mind, I shall be all right when I'm on board again. And now—will you do one thing for me before I go back to my own room?"

"Anything, if I can. But——"

"Please, no buts."

"I've been thinking. I told you that I'm not wise, but I know people that are."

"Lucky girl that you are! Well?"

"I don't know what you're going to ask me. But if I do something for you, you must do something for me."

"Anything, and without a but."

"You promise? You swear it?"

"I give you my word of honour."

"You must swear it, or it won't do. You say you believe in something; swear by all you believe."

"If it will satisfy you—very well, I swear it, as long as it is neither to believe in Egin, or whatever his name is, or to give up the North Pole, or to——"

"No; it's nothing you can't do. You swear it?"

"Juro."

"Is that your oath?"

"I can't do more, except give you my word of honour, and that I've done."

"Attend to me, then. I can see some things, but not all: and when it comes to ruling the great ones, I'm blind. You may say what you like; but there's more in it than bears and icebergs, to keep brave men, all with different stars, from finding their way. I know the stars; but it wants stronger than me to help the stars against the evil ones."

"Well?"

"You're attending? Now I know of one that knows everything. When I used to be with Aaron——"

"A pleasant companion you must have found him, I should think. But—before you go on—I know so little about your profession—had you been singing with him before you came to England?"

"For years. I don't know how to tell you what I want to say. Can you keep secrets—from everybody, I mean?"

"I hope so, though I don't like them."

"But from everybody—even from your own right hand—even from Doctor Vaughan?"

"I shall be proud of your confidence, Mademoiselle." His knowledge of woman-kind taught him that to be told a secret from which another man was to be definitely excluded was a special token of favour. And so, perhaps, it may be, as a rule. He had not yet learned that in such matters exceptions outnumber rules by a million to one.

"I will trust you. I've not always been Mdlle. Leczinska—I haven't always been a Pole."

"I see—your stage name and your stage country."

"I suppose so."

"Is that part of the secret?"

"That is the secret.—No; don't ask me questions. I'm going to tell you only what I please. Do you know a big town—a long way off from here?"

"I know many big towns, a very long way off. Do you mean in England?"

"It's not over the sea. But it stands on a river that runs between rocks: the river runs into a great river: there is a large church: there are big ships and sailors: there are women there who wear bonnets like that coal-box: there are trees in the middle—"

"And you can't think of the name?"

"I don't know the name. But you must go there, or else send."

"Without knowing where? There are hundreds of such towns, though I don't quite understand about the bonnets."

"But you have sworn to do it."

"I know that—but can't you make my going a little more easy? You say that it's not across the sea—how far is it? Which way is it? Do you know any place near?"

"No—there's a place called the Old Point Hotel, and the Royal Arms."

"Have you been there yourself?"

"You are not to ask me questions. You are to do what I tell you."

"And having found a place with ships and public-houses—?"

"Whenever Aaron was there he used to go and see the Wise Woman. He would never let me see her—"

"Then you have been there? Who in the world is Aaron?"

The ever ready anger came into her voice. "Do you want me to tell you lies? Every time I answer a question it shall be a lie."

"Forgive me, pray. I won't ask you another question."

"He never let me see her: I think he was somehow afraid. But I've heard of her from others than him. She was a great *Rani*—a Queen."

"Do you mean to say—a Queen of what? A Queen of gipsies?"

"I don't understand you. She is a Queen. She is called Lady Margaret: but you won't find her that way."

"And what does she do?"

"I tell you what I have been told—what is true. She is not common. She came from over the sea. I have heard Aaron talking about it often with old people: he'd never let me listen, but I've made

believe to be asleep, and heard it all without my eyes. She was never a child like I have been, but came as if from the very stars, ready-made. She lived with great people, not like us, and wore rings and satin. It's awful to think of, but they say she'd killed a child for the great devil. It's no wonder she's got to be wise, and she never laughed nor cried. Now she lives all alone by herself in a big house, and makes gold, and whatever she says is true."

"Why, she is a real witch—and this is the nineteenth century! Is it possible that there are such things still?"

"She knows how to rule the great ones: how else should she make the gold? I could tell you all sorts of things I've heard—only it's not lucky to talk about those things. You must go to her."

"I should be only too happy to unearth a live witch. Are you quite sure that you are not one as well?"

"You must ask her everything."

"What—about getting to the North Pole?"

"You have sworn it. And whatever she tells you, you must do."

"I doubt no more whether I am on my head or my heels," Lord Lisburn thought. "I am most certainly not on my heels. What on earth does it all mean? I am in London, and yet in a room that looks more like Bagdad. I am talking to the veiled Isis, and have sworn to visit an unknown country to ask a witch who sacrifices children to the devil how to get to the North Pole in spite of the King of the North Wind. No one would believe me if I pledged them my honour. And the worst of it is that I feel my wits giving away. Oh, if I could only manage five minutes alone with the dumb-bells! Is it the effect of that confounded glass of Moselle? Or is it delirium? This is London, this is the nineteenth century, I am I, twelve times twelve are a hundred and forty-four. No, I won't give in. Puss never walked in boots—the Fisherman never caught the genii. If she would only lift up her veil! Am I mad or is she?"

He forgot one thing in his catalogue—the sweet soft voice that spoke as if its natural language was an enchanted song. Not even the wildest nonsense could sound like itself when spoken in such a tone. I have not dwelt on this theme, nor will I. Words deal with thoughts: they are as powerless of themselves to denote tones as they are to depict hues. What is to be said when a voice does not make people think but simply feel? Women's voices are for the most part like their handwriting—as conventional and as devoid of meaning or character. They all say the same things, great or little, with the same inflections and in the same tones. When a woman does not speak from the ends of her teeth, but from the chest, that is to say from the part wherein the heart lies, we receive the same impression as when we welcome handwriting from a woman's hand free from loops and angles, from thin up-strokes and thick down. She may not be lady-like, but she is sure to be a lady: she is more likely to be gentle than genteel.

This, however, is to keep still within the limits of thought. Zelda's voice must be suggested by a fable, if merely out of revenge for its having suggested so many.

"I never hear any music," complained an envious beech-tree. "I hate the birds: they worry me." Suddenly the soft breeze went down, and his own leaves and branches no longer rustled and stirred. "Ungrateful wretch that I am," he exclaimed: "I never thought I heard a note, and all the while I was feeling the sweetest music in the world."

That is why Zelda's voice, while she is speaking, must be left alone. It was not thought about, but only heard.

"Then you will go?" she asked, after a pause—rather impatiently, considering his condition of body.

"You have bound me to go. Only promise in your turn that you will tell nobody of my fool's—of my errand?"

"Whom should I tell?"

"But I must find out first where I am to go. And when I am there, how is this Wise Woman, as you call her, to be found? I suppose you would hardly advise my advertising in *The Times*?"

"Let me see. Do you know a place called Newmarket, where they have races?"

"I should think I did."

"That is on the way."

"Well, that's something. Do you know the next towns?"

"Canterbury—that was one place after Lincoln. And before Lincoln there was—let me see—Winchester: but I can't tell you any between Winchester and Norwich, except Shrewsbury. And it was a very long way from Norwich."

"Rather a roundabout way from Newmarket to Norwich, isn't it? You can't help me much, that's clear." Here was a straightforward difficulty to be attacked—that put him on his mettle, in spite of the absurdity of the whole affair. It was almost as good as looking for the Pole itself. And then the quest was imposed by a voice worth obeying, though no influence was rained from any eyes.

"Here goes, then," he said, with his rather boyish laugh. "The route's no use, but I'll make sure of the description. You haven't a scrap of paper? Never mind; I daresay I've got something in my pocket. Ah, what's this? That'll do—the card to Lady Penrose's ball. That's no use now, thank fortune. Let me see—river—big church—ships—women with coal-scuttles. Trees in the middle. Two inns—royal arms. And now it's time for my favour. I want to hear you sing. I've been good, haven't I?"

"You are too good. I love you. What shall I sing?"

"How can I tell you what to sing? What was that you sang in *Sylvia's Bracelet*—that song by Abner? I never heard anything like it, and I've been everywhere.—I suppose," he thought cunningly, "she must take off her veil to sing."

But she did no such thing. "Well, a bargain's a bargain. The song isn't Abner's, all the same—I know which you mean. But I've been learning much better things lately—I only sing my old nonsense to myself now. Just listen how I can shake—There!"

"Brava! But I'd a great deal sooner hear you sing to yourself, if you don't mind."

"Lucas would scold me fearfully if he knew—but I don't care for him. And yet—No, don't ask me to sing that song now."

"Is that how you think my promise ought to be kept?"

"The devil! No."

He would have been still more bewildered could he have seen what images that now historic song of hers raised up before the *prima donna* as she translated into the language of her grand piano the flourishes of Bob the Scrapper. Ever since the night of the *début* she had steadily refused to sing those unlucky words. But there was no help for it—Lord Lisburn had fairly bought it, and she had nothing to do but begin.

"If I, so mean, were Royal Queen
Of England, France or Spain,
Sceptre and crown, I'd throw them down,
So I might sail the main"—

"Brava!" again cried the sailor earl.

"For a sailor lad my heart has had
That sails upon the sea,
And mirk or glim, I'd sail with him
If he would sail with me."

Lord Lisburn was too intent upon the full contralto, fuller and richer by far than when Harold Vaughan had been stopped by it on his path of life, to hear a knock at the door. "I should think he would sail with you," he said enthusiastically, "if that's how you ask him."

"If he, the last before the mast,
To whom my heart is true,
Were o'er them all made admiral,
And captain of the crew—
Through evil name, through sin and shame,
I'd sail the wide world's sea—
Fall foul or fair, I would not care,
If he would care for me."

It was not without reason that Lord Lisburn had boasted of his love of danger. It was with good cause, I hope it is clear, that he laid claim to the title of gentleman. But never in all his wanderings had he been in greater danger than now of what people would consider a breach of the maxim that *noblesse oblige*. It is true that he was enfeebled by illness, and by the strange excitement of the last few hours—that, as he had owned to himself, he was, morally speaking, not standing upright on his heels. The few now living who may have heard the voice of Mdle. Leczinska will partly guess what I mean, but even they did not fully know the voice of Zelda. Not even Harold Vaughan or the boors of St. Bavons

had heard that: it was reserved for Lord Lisburn to hear the first-fruits of the grafting of art upon nature. She was even surprised at herself at the sudden heat which seemed to have come out of it and through it while she sang. Lord Lisburn was as far out of her mind as if he had been in the flesh at the North Pole. But if he was nothing to her as her vague fancies chased each other unconsciously through every nook and corner of her mind's maze, this foreign actress, who smoked and swore and bewildered him with her caprices and extravagancies, was gradually beginning to exercise a strange fascination over him. The veiled face, the sweet and penetrating voice, more musical even in speech than in song, the outlandish surroundings, the wild ideas, the sympathy she had shown with his own life and aims, and which he naturally extended to himself, certainly did not tend to drive the remains of fever from his veins. The words "I love you," though he was not so vain as to take them literally, had nevertheless not fallen on barren ground. He felt as if the song had acted like an elixir, to make him well and strong—as if there might be a worse fate in the world than to take her at her song's word for the Queen of the *Esmeralda*, through foul and fair, mirk and glim.

Instinctively, he felt that he must do something to make the Siren of the enchanted chamber raise her veil.

"If he would care for me,"

was still in his ears and turning into something more than melody when the knock that he had not heard at the street door was repeated on the door of the room. He started, and did not notice that Zelda, whose fingers still lingered on the keys, started more than he.

"Come in!" she cried; and started once more to see that her old song had called Harold Vaughan to her side again. The coincidence was natural enough, but no coincidences seem natural in Fairyland. Harold Vaughan had come at the first summons from Lord Lisburn, and arrived to find his patron—so it looked to him—in strange company, considering all the circumstances from a rational point of view.

He hesitated, as well he might, before the veiled lady and her strange room. But he had not followed the course of the dream, and his arrival was like the entry of Common Sense into Fairyland. Zelda got up from the piano, and without a word went into a corner of the room and curled herself up among the heap of sofa cushions.

"Ah! I thought you'd come, old fellow," said Lord Lisburn, flushing up to his forehead. "But I'm dead tired. I'll go and lie down in the next room—you can talk to me there. You're real, anyhow."

The doctor took his hand and then his arm.

"I never hoped to find your lordship well enough to sit up—all the better; you can change your quarters the sooner. But do you mean to say that Sir Godfrey lets you sit here in this horrible atmosphere of flowers?"

"This is not my room; I've not been out of bed till to-day."

"And you ought to be in bed for a week to come."

"Come, old fellow, it isn't fair to hit a man when he's down. You're right though, I daresay. Thank you, Mademoiselle—for your song, I mean. You will not be very angry if I find my way here again, in spite of your flowers?"

But she only curled herself more deeply in her sofa cushions, and answered not a word. As soon as her visitors had passed the inner doors, she crept back to the piano and began to hum her song to herself, very softly, over again.

She was scarcely in the middle of her first stanza, however, when she heard the doctor speaking to her.

"Pray keep your piano quiet, Mademoiselle," he said; "I have made Lord Lisburn lie down; do you want to drive him into a fever? You have already let him throw himself back a week at least, if not more."

"How dare you speak to me in that way? I have not put up my veil a moment. This is my room and my piano, and I'll do as I please."

"Let her go on," said Lord Lisburn faintly from within. "It doesn't disturb me at all. It does me good to hear some music."

Harold Vaughan closed the door. "I think we had better understand one another at once, Mademoiselle," he said. "There is clearly some mystery about you. Of course it is nothing to me, you will say, and in one way it is nothing. But I hope I am not such an ungrateful brute as not to feel that what concerns Lord Lisburn concerns me. I suppose there is no need to beat about the bush with you; men in my profession and women in yours are people of the world. And I cannot get rid of a strange fancy that we have met before. You are now a Pole, I know, and a famous actress; it seems insane to think you were ever an English street-singer. But am I right in thinking you were not christened Pauline, but by the stranger name of Zelda? Is that why you hide your face from me?"

"Never! I don't know the name."

"I have never seen you—if you are not Zelda—except in some disguise. If you are not Zelda, you will have no objection to lift up your veil."

"I won't lift up my veil."

"Well, then, it is as well you should know all that I have it in my power to tell Lord Lisburn."

"Oh, you may tell him what you like—it's nothing to me."

"So you say."

"I do say so. What do I care? He won't believe you. And if he did, what should I care?"

"The world thinks you would care a great deal."

"Who's the world? You mean the people that hear me sing?"

"Contempt for the world has a very graceful look, Mademoiselle, but you must have learned as well as I that the world never submits to be despised."

"I don't know what you mean."

"Surely you do."

"Then you mean nothing?"

"I see. It suits you that Lord Lisburn should be compromised?"

"Compromised?"

"Don't you know the word? Well, you can't pretend to misunderstand me if I speak plain things. To judge from appearances, it will no doubt please you to hear that people say all that can be said of a woman who remains, all by herself, to nurse a young man who is ill at her lodgings, especially when the woman is an actress and the man is a peer."

"All that can be said? Where's the harm? Ought I to have turned him out like a dog, when he was hurt for me?"

"No; but if you cared for your own reputation you would have gone elsewhere."

"Cared for what?"

"Which do you mean—that you don't care for it, or that it isn't worth caring for?"

"I mean neither—nothing. You are too wise for me. I don't know reputation nor compromise. Why should I go? Why should people care where I live, or what I do? I sing for them and they pay me: that's all. If you mean anything wrong, it isn't true, it couldn't be: and if there was, it's nothing to them. I'm as free to do what I like as they, so long as I keep myself from them, and let nobody touch me."

Harold Vaughan, in spite both of his profession and his professions, was not quite so much a man of the world as to feel instinctively when people were speaking truth and when falsehood—he had had to deal with but two women, of whom one, as he believed, had been false to him, while the one before him, he felt sure, had lied. Nor was he, like Lord Lisburn, ready to be carried away by the romance of an adventure. But even he caught himself admitting the suggestion, "Can this possibly be the most incredible innocence that man or woman ever heard of?" But he was angry with himself for such treason to common sense.

"Well," he said, "of course I can't control Lord Lisburn; I have no right even to advise him. But I shall advise him, whether I have the right or no, and will take the consequences."

How could he read what was really occupying her whole mind? Nothing was in her thoughts but an all-absorbing horror of his identifying her with Zelda. She would have gone to the stake rather than have confessed it—at least to him. She did not in the least comprehend why he cared about knowing it: she only knew that he did care, and that was enough. After all, what was the first spur to her theatrical ambition but the hope, without a conscious motive, that she might be Zelda, the beggar girl, to this great man no more? What she felt towards him was more like awe than love—an unborn passion that might become love, but that might also become hate with equal likelihood, for in hearts like hers,

which have never known the full taste of either, the two most opposite passions are in their outset curiously akin. Hate and love are at all events so far alike, that they make us single out one person from the world, and care supremely about what he thinks of ourselves. If Zelda had been afflicted with the curse of self-analysis, she would have learned much from her bitter disappointment at the little effect of what she considered the magnificence of her surroundings had seemed to have upon him. But, at the same time, she was impressed by their not having sufficed to conceal her from his penetration.

No; anything was better than that he should think of her as she hated to think of herself. He had impressed on her the test of the veil: it must be undergone at the risk of exposure, even at the risk of the working of the Evil Eye.

"Who is Zelda?" she asked suddenly.

He lifted his shoulders contemptuously. "Nobody," he said. "Only a girl who brings mischief to all she comes near."

He could see her tremble from head to foot, and she stamped on the ground—that favourite gesture of hers, that seemed to imply everything at once without words. She felt almost goaded into using the power of which he had now twice accused her.

"Will you believe me if I let down my veil?"

"I shall see."

"Then see!" she exclaimed, tearing off the lace, and shewing him two eyes glowing like fire. Could that passionate, beautiful woman's face be that of the beggar of St. Bavons? He was astonished out of his suspicions, and his own eyes, as if ashamed, literally went down before hers. No; if this ever had been Zelda, it was Zelda no more: she was right there. He had never seen a face like this before, and his recollection of special features had grown dim—thousands of women have dark faces and black hair. In the flash of the moment he was about to stammer "No," when his eyes, in their fall to the floor, caught sight of something at her feet, which her sudden movement had caused to drop from her bosom.

He stooped down, picked it up, and held it before her. She was more than answered—it was the gold watch that Harold Vaughan had lost on Whit Monday.

CHAPTER III.

THE PASTEBOARD CASTLE.

HAROLD VAUGHAN threw a few shillings away that evening to hear the pickpocket in her rôle of *prima donna* at the Oberon, not as critic, but as spectator. He thought she sang badly, but as the popular favourite was applauded to the roof, as usual, he set down his judgment to his own

want of knowledge. Carol was hanging about, of course, in his usual mysterious capacity as unattached manager of everything and everybody.

"There"—he said, when in the course of his ubiquity he had dropped for a moment upon Harold Vaughan. "Only to think all that would have been thrown away if it hadn't been for me. Isn't she splendid?"

"I daresay she is: but I believe I've heard as good in a public-house before now."

"You daresay? Why, there's two hundred pounds in the house, if there's a penny—what can you say more? That's Art, if you please. By the way, you're an art critic now, thanks to me. Who do you think had better do her portrait? Of course I know all the painters, and could make them do anything, but just think about it, will you—somebody that could carry out my own ideas? By the way, too, we must have some new anecdotes about her—the old ones are getting stale. The Polish business did very well, but rather too well: there are three more Polish *sopranis* already, two of them English and one Irish, and a Miss Brown or something, who failed two years ago as an Italian, is going to come out brand-new as a Circassian. We can't give her a change of country, I suppose, or I'd outbid the Circassian with a Chinese. I suppose it wouldn't be safe to say that she's going to be married to a certain young nobleman under romantic circumstances? One might hint that she's a duchess in disguise, or that somebody has committed suicide for her, or made her a present of the biggest diamond in Europe, or that she has escaped from Siberia, or poisoned three husbands, or supports an aged grandmother—any would do: perhaps I'll give them all a turn. I think I'll take the grandmother first: it touches people. It's the touch of nature. She shall be blind and deaf, and saved Napoleon in the retreat from Moscow. Any old story of Napoleon does for a peg: everybody will think it's true, so long as there's a name in it they've heard when they were babies. Keep the ball rolling—that's the game. Hush—pray don't talk so much: it's very odd wherever I go how people always look at me. You won't come behind? Good-by, then: I'm going to have a talk with the Leczinska," he added, very loudly, so that everybody within ear-shot might hear.

It is impossible to exaggerate the agony that the inopportune discovery of the watch had brought upon Zelda. The knowledge that she had been allowing a castle to build itself in the air came to her simultaneously with the collapse of its foundations. To be found out in a theft did not mean to her what it would have meant to anybody else, in her position. It carried neither moral shame nor social fear. It never came into her head to connect the idea of sending for a policeman with Harold Vaughan, and if the thought had occurred to her it would not have come in the shape of fear.

She was a woman hopelessly alone in a world that she could not comprehend. All the fire of nature was within her, hungering after an outlet. Had she been a heaven-born artist, it may be said, would she not

have thrown herself heart and soul into the career that had been given her by Carol and destiny, and therein found the satisfaction that art, according to common-places, bestows upon those who follow Her for herself, and not for her reward? Possibly: and yet there might be the divine fire in her, and it might only be a torment to her, all the same. To be an artist one must surely know what art means. From Lucas, Zelda had learned that Art means the deliberate practice of pedantic rules. From Carol, she had learned that Art means the readiest way of getting money. From Abner, she had learned that Art means performing his own music and no other. Finally, from the great public, the highest court of appeal, she had learned that Art means an occasional evening's amusement. It was not likely that she, to whom the books of history and experience were sealed, should be wiser than they, and she looked upon her solitary indulgencies of her natural musical instinct as so many follies. She was bound to be false to her genius, and to bend it into a machine for getting all she could out of a world that, except as an enormous gathering of gulls, was nothing to her. That she succeeded so marvellously was of course owing to higher qualities which she could not contrive to crush or conceal. But as she could not possibly suspect this, and as none of her guides, philosophers or friends had ever uttered in her hearing or out of it a single noble word, so she was compelled for want of knowledge to despise her own genius and to find an outlet for the demon within her in less wholesome ways.

No wonder that the whims and caprices of the *prima donna* were without end. Foolish admirers admired and encouraged them, common-sense people sneered at them as affectation or charlatanism. They were neither. But then neither did whims and caprices provide an outlet: they were but palliatives, and symptoms that she needed one. They were simply moral issues. But her banker's book and her bouquets were real: as real existences to her as Harold Vaughan. Perhaps all alike were dross and dreams, Harold Vaughan and all. The real Harold Vaughan was most assuredly no hero, save to her. It was not his fault, however, that a girl chose to regard him through a prism. Not even yet will I call this love, for love, like art, requires an element of conscious knowledge. It was rather the worship of an idea, which a larger soul had somehow chanced to find growing out of itself and to have transplanted into a smaller. I suppose everybody must worship something or other, if only a common clay fetish: and large souls have a curious tendency to worship the small—it is but human nature to feel drawn to what is most unlike ourselves. So much the better, in spite of the apparent waste and bitterness. The soul, too high to be worshipped, worships: the soul too small to worship, is worshipped. The smaller is ennobled, and the greater ennoble, so that both gain in the only fitting way. But as it is better to give than to receive, so, as is most due, the greater soul is the greater gainer after all.

So out of these three poor corner-stones, a bank-book, a bundle of bouquets, and a blockhead—it was Vaughan himself who had given himself the title—the threefold Zelda, Sylvia and Pauline had built up her

mansion in the air. The petals of the bundle became leaves of the book, and the leaves of the book became stones of the bridge that would lead everywhere, even to such a star as Harold Vaughan.

What the end was to be had not even begun to shape itself in her mind. The whole story was with no more visible beginning or end than the bridge of trap-doors in the vision of Mirza. She had never tried to look forward beyond the next sunset since she was born: and as her life was confined to the present, so was it all the more intense. Her unconscious life implied the idea of some future or other, and of course it was to bring happiness: without intense hope, intense life is a contradiction in terms. And here at last enters her third life, in which she was not Pauline, not Zelda, but Sylvia. She could not act the same part night after night without to a certain extent confusing her own identity. This was one result of her unrecognised genius, but it was also the result of the intensity with which she lived every hour, in whatever form it came. It was not that she made deliberate comparisons between her life on and off the stage. But she never quite ceased to be Sylvia, even when she was most simply Zelda. The great situation in the last act, where the heroine has her foot upon the necks of all her enemies, was the grandest ideal of human life that had ever been presented to her—indeed the only consistent and intelligible ideal. This was the thirst which the discovery of the watch had only increased by destroying every reasonable hope of satisfaction. She was almost in the mood that leads us to move fiends to our purpose if the benignant powers refuse to be reconciled.

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